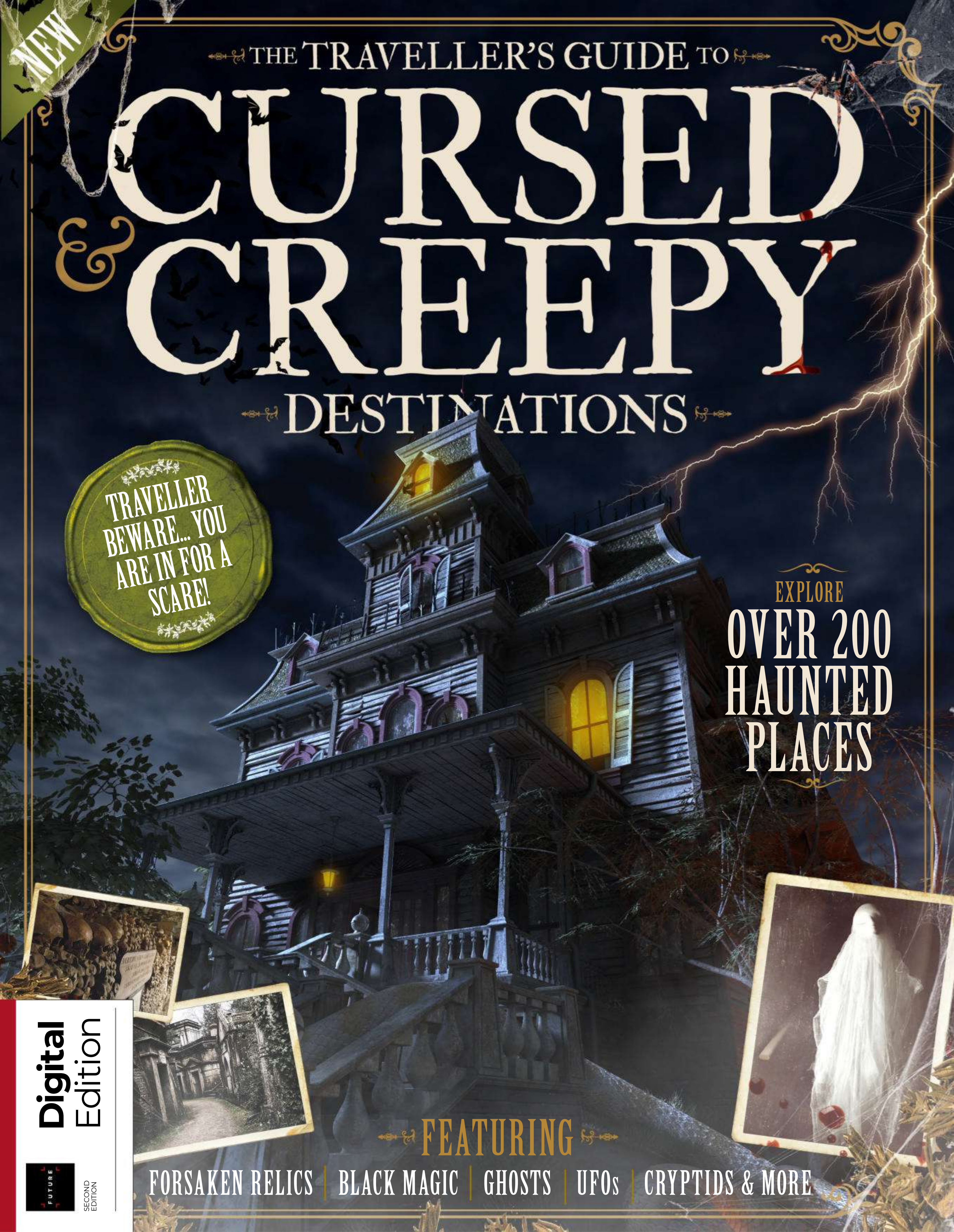
NEW

THE TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO

CURSED & CREEPY DESTINATIONS



TRAVELLER BEWARE... YOU ARE IN FOR A SCARE!

EXPLORE

OVER 200 HAUNTED PLACES

FEATURING

FORSAKEN RELICS | BLACK MAGIC | GHOSTS | UFOs | CRYPTIDS & MORE

Digital Edition

FUTURE
SECOND EDITION

DISCLAIMER

In light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, some destinations in this book are no longer safe to visit because the situation is unpredictable and could further escalate without warning. Where you see this icon, most governments strongly advise against all travel to these countries.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a dramatic impact on global travel. While all effort has been made to ensure locations can be visited, this is subject to local rules and regulations that could change at any given time. Therefore this book should be used, first and foremost, as a source of inspiration. Always check the current travel guidelines when planning a trip, and adhere to any local restrictions at your destination.

Readers rely on any information at their sole risk, and *The Traveller's Guide to Cursed and Creepy Destinations*, and its publisher, Future Publishing Ltd, limit their liability to the fullest extent permitted by law.

WELCOME

From sinister abandoned asylums, forests infested with phantoms and folkloric monsters that roam the landscapes, to houses that were once home to homicidal maniacs, museums devoted to the macabre and castles haunted by their harrowing pasts, *The Traveller's Guide to Cursed and Creepy Destinations* is an essential companion to any budding paranormal investigator, amateur historian and dark tourist. If you're not afraid of what might lurk in the shadows you'll find a bucket list of hair-raising sites that'll send shivers down your spine. Why not plan a weekend escape to one of our Cold Spots – cities and towns that are a hotbed of supernatural activity with enough spooky sites to keep you occupied (and awake) for days on end? Or perhaps road trip through the USA on the hunt for Bigfoot (p121), take a tour of the UK via its high-spirited (and highly spirited) pubs (p30), or simply book a stay in one of the world's most haunted hotels (p24) ... Just don't hold us responsible for what you discover hiding in the dark!

CONTENTS

An Introduction to the Paranormal

6 What is Cursed and Creepy?
Welcome to the world of the paranormal

8 The Rise of Haunted Tourism
Why spooky places get under our skin

12 A Field Guide to Spooks
The tricks of the trade for budding ghost hunters

14 Houses of Horror
13 of the world's most haunted houses

Cold Spot!

22 Shadows of the Shambles
The spectres who haunt York's medieval streets

24 Sleep With One Eye Open
The world's most haunted hotels

30 Raise Your Spirits!
A paranormal pub crawl of Great Britain

Cold Spot!

34 Britain's Most Haunted Village
Explore the extremely haunted village of Pluckley

36 The World's Creepiest Castles
What's spookier than an ancient fortress?

Cold Spot!

48 Welcome to Dracula Country
Explore the haunted nation of Romania

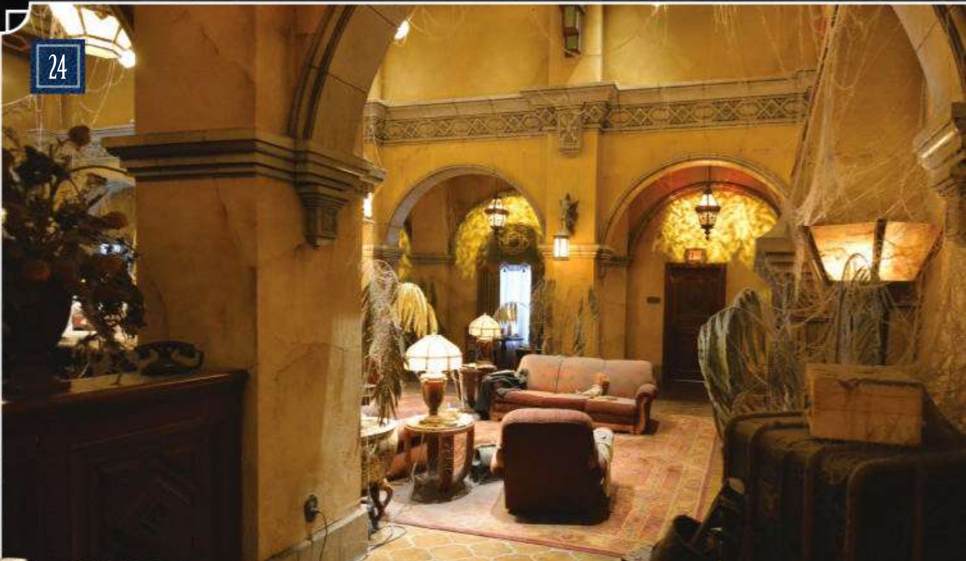
50 Public Spectres
The spirits that haunt the public sector

52 Shock Treatment!
...that's all you'll get at these hospitals

54 Phantoms of the Opera
The most dramatic ghosts in the world!

Cold Spot!

56 Ghosts of the Green Isle
The shadowy side of the city of Dublin



ROLY'S FUDGE PANTRY YORK
22

58 Paranormal Prisons
Don't get locked up in one of these!

62 The Headless Horseman's Haunt
Enter the town of Sleepy Hollow

64 Tombstone Tourism
A guide to visiting cemeteries

66 The World's Spookiest Cemeteries
Graveyards that'll send shivers down your spine

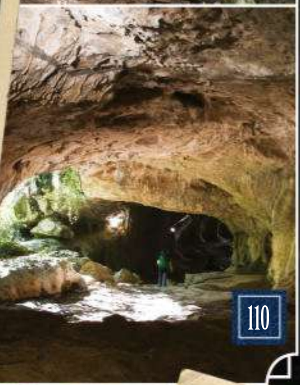
Cold Spot!
72 The Voodoo-vibed Necropolis
New Orleans – America's most haunted city

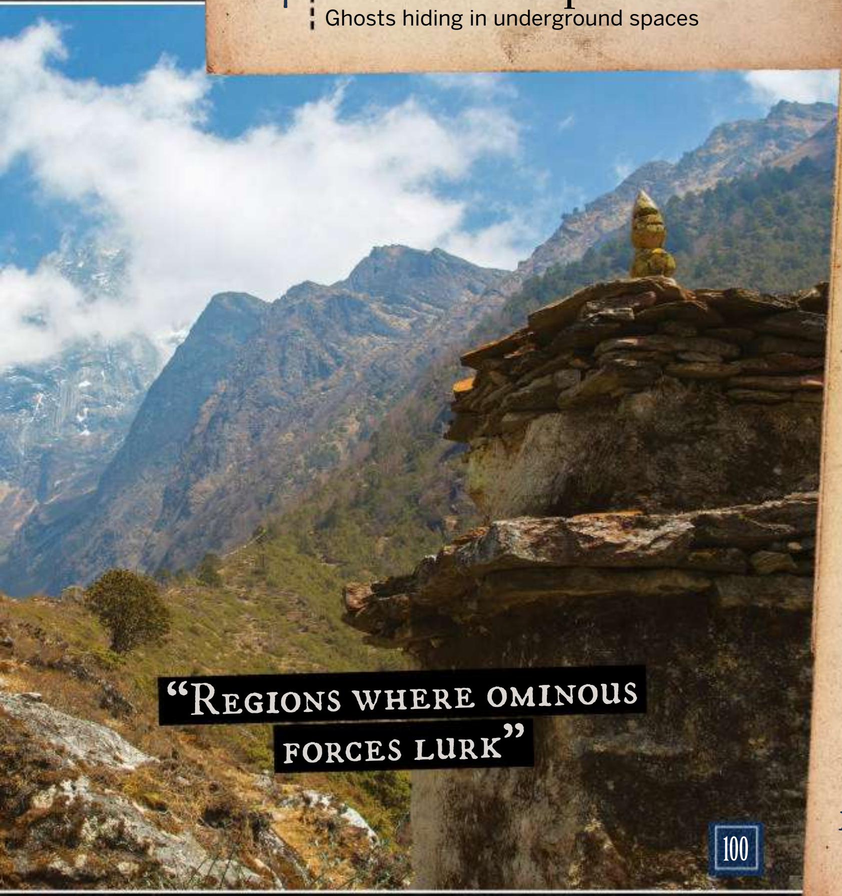
74 Blood-Curdling Boneyards and Morbid Mausoleums
Must-see catacombs and ossuaries

Cold Spot!
78 The Spectres of Old Smoky
Edinburgh is one of Britain's most haunted cities

80 Unhallowed Ground
Once consecrated sites that now house the unholy

84 Subterranean Spooks
Ghosts hiding in underground spaces





"Regions where ominous forces lurk"

Cold Spot!
88 Ghosts, Ghouls and the Gothic
Dracula's final haunt, the gothic city of Whitby

90 Shadows of the Past
These ancient relics harbour serious curses

94 Ghost Towns
The world's creepiest abandoned spots

Cold Spot!
96 The Witch City
Discover the witches of Salem

98 Ill-fated Islands
Don't get wrecked on one of these cursed islands

100 Cursed Landscapes
Regions where ominous forces lurk

110 Dare You Visit the Witches Caves?
Hollow homes to sinister sorcery

112 Dark Waters
The world's most terrifying bodies of water

116 Formidable Forests and Petrifying Woods
Don't go down to these woods today!

122 Magical and Macabre Museums
Cursed and creepy collections

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CURSED AND CREEPY?

For as long as man has walked the Earth, there have been matters of the strange and unexplained to frighten and excite us

Written by Kate Cherrell

The earliest civilisations formulated protective rituals and magical seals to keep the spirits of the dead away from their doors. Others would invite their ancestors into their houses and minds in the hope of receiving wisdom from beyond the grave. Ideas of ghosts and hauntings have evolved with time, but we have always searched for meaning in what lies beyond. Beyond life, beyond death, beyond the universe, or even just beyond the edge of the woods.

The paranormal (used interchangeably with the word 'supernatural') literally means something that is beyond nature and refers to any strange and unexplained phenomena that is currently outside our human and scientific understanding. Many stories and beliefs fall under the paranormal umbrella, including the ancient ideas of undead spirits as well as psychics, aliens and cryptids.

The idea of exploring such paranormal phenomena reached mainstream popularity in the early 2000s due to TV shows such as *Most Haunted*. However, some of the most important and influential investigators were conducting their work centuries before. Harry Price, born in 1881, was a British researcher who made his name investigating haunted houses and exposing fraudulent mediums and set the template for many investigators today. Before Price was the Victorian writer Catherine Crowe who first introduced the term poltergeist (the German term for "noisy spirit", denoting a ghost with a tendency to haunt people, not places, and show their presence through brute force, destruction and harassment) to English audiences. Her collection of paranormal reports and investigations from 1848, *The Night-Side of Nature, or, Ghosts and Ghost-seers,* remains popular and is celebrated as the first example of paranormal investigation (more on that on page 12!).

Many of the destinations explored in this book are paranormal hotspots (we've dubbed them 'cold spots', find out why on page 12) so let's take a deeper look at the most common types of reported paranormal phenomena…

GHOSTS

Ghosts are generally agreed to be the spirit of soul of a deceased person or animal. Also called phantoms, apparitions (a visible ghost), wraiths and spectres, they have been recorded as long ago as ancient Mesopotamia (circa 6000 BCE), where a spirit called a Gidim was created at the time of death, taking on the personality and memories of the deceased. In contemporary western society, we view ghosts as either echoes of long-deceased humans, or sentient spirits, cursed to walk the Earth with unfinished business. However, it was the Victorians who produced the golden age of ghost stories, where spirits would return to right wrongs, strengthen morals or reveal misbehaviours. This great literary era reflects enormously in our modern attitudes to ghosts, suggesting that we can learn from the haunting mistakes of our past, but also, that ghosts may not be all that they seem. Ghosts may be friendly and benevolent or weak, reduced to a shriek in the night or a creak on the floorboards.

CURSES

It's believed that negative energies, not just spirits, can attach themselves to places and objects. There are many religious roots for curses, including a great number from the Bible, where Noah curses Canaan and Christ curses the fig tree. In Hinduism, a Rishi, or Sage, is able to both bless and curse, whereas in African American Hoodoo, practitioners can curse or jinx at will. Tales of curses flooded the media following the development of Egyptology in the early 19th century, and the discovery in 1922 of Tutankhamun's tomb (p90) elevated tales of curses into mainstream media.

UFOS

Aliens and UFOs continue to be a source of fear, fascination and conspiracy theories for enthusiasts and governments alike, with several hundred reports filed to official bodies every year. Sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects have occurred in waves throughout time, with medieval manuscripts documenting celestial phenomena and the mass hysteria that followed thereafter. Every so often today's governments cause sensations by declassifying and releasing old UFO files.

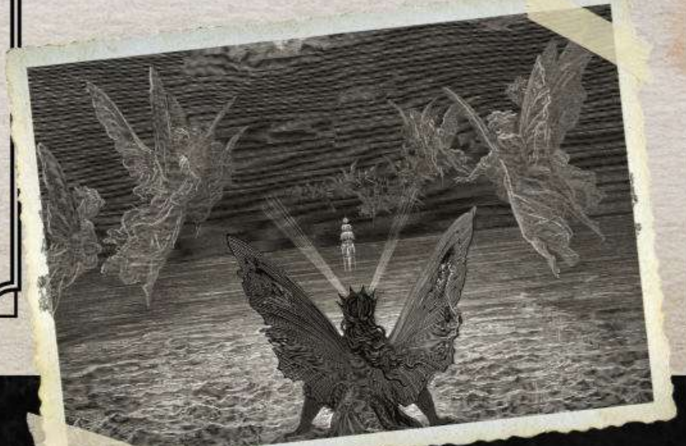
CRYPTIDS AND MONSTERS

Cryptzoology is the study of creatures that are not currently known to conventional science. It's studied by cryptozoologists, who believe that many creatures are yet to be discovered – a belief that is strengthened by the scientific treatment of animals such as the duck billed platypus and the okapi, both of which were initially thought to be hoaxes. Cryptids such as Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster and Mothman are celebrities in their own right, despite there being no proof that these mysterious animals ever existed.

Modern monster-hunters continue to search for creatures that have eluded science. Big cat sightings, such as the Beast of Bodmin Moor continue, with theories of their existence ranging from escaped exotic pets to Ice Age survivors. Many cryptids are linked to cultural beliefs, and continue to cause hysteria to this day.

GODS AND 'ALTERNATIVE' BELIEFS

Supernatural sightings are often linked to personal spiritual and religious beliefs. Apparitions of angels and saints have been reported during periods of religious ecstasy, and visions of gods and guides may be induced by individuals in order to progress or enlighten their spirituality. Creatures such as angels and demons may be based in established religion, but have been accepted into differing beliefs across the world. Stories of Satanic worship are often found in tales of haunted locations and negative energies. Meanwhile, alternative religions such as Paganism, Wicca and Druidry may have several gods for several purposes, such as fertility or protection, or may worship nature as a singular benevolent power.



GLOSSARY

ESOTERIC

Secretive schools of thought

ESP

Extra-Sensory Perception, aka sixth sense. This includes abilities such as telekinesis (moving objects with your mind), telepathy (wordlessly communicating with others), mediumship (making contact with spirits of the deceased), and other psychic abilities

FORTEAN

Used interchangeably with 'paranormal'. The term derives from the surname of Charles Fort (1874-1932) who investigated so-called anomalous phenomena

GHOUL

An evil spirit entity originating in pre-Islamic Arabian religion

GHOSTLORE

Myth, legend or story in folklore that concerns ghosts

METAPHYSICS

The philosophy of the fundamental nature of reality

OCCULT

Esoteric supernatural beliefs and practices including astrology, alchemy, and magic

SÉANCE

From the French word 'session', or 'to sit'; denotes an activity where people gather together and attempt to communicate with spirits

SPIRITUALISM

A social and religious movement that began in the mid-19th century based upon the belief that spirits exist within a 'spirit world' and have the ability and inclination to communicate with the living

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

TICKET
№123456789

THE RISE OF HAUNTED TOURISM

Humans have a natural tendency towards the macabre and a curiosity that would kill a cat, leading to an insatiable appetite for the supernatural

Written by Alice Pattillo

Dark tourism is having a bit of a moment lately. You've probably heard the term thanks to the popular Netflix show, or perhaps through your favourite podcast. Dark tourism is generally defined as tourism to sites associated with death, tragedy and the macabre. The most famous dark tourism destinations include Auschwitz, Ground Zero and the Cambodian Killing Fields, but many dark tourists also enjoy exploring graveyards, catacombs and even castles, crossing over into haunted tourism and legend tripping. It is seemingly human nature to be fascinated by mankind's own morbid history, as seen through our obsession with true crime and box-office thrillers, seeking out only the most salacious historical events, and traffic jams caused by onlookers who can't help but take a peek at the car crash on the other side of the road. Our ancestors were similarly enthralled, if not more so, finding pleasure in gladiatorial games and flocking to witness the latest public execution. But it's not just death itself that spikes our interest (there's a reason why *Unsolved Mysteries* often ventures into the world of the paranormal!), it's the thrill of the unknown and the tales we tell ourselves. Many of these dark destinations hold very little to see, but it's the stories left in these spaces that spark our curiosity – the legend and lore associated with the place that draws us back, generation after generation.

Right: 1960s TV series *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* featured a young widowed writer who unwittingly rents a haunted house

Bottom right: The alien-focused science fiction film *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* is one of the most successful movies of all time

Below: Studies show that subjecting yourself to a little risk and fear can help prevent mental health problems

FEAR FANDOM

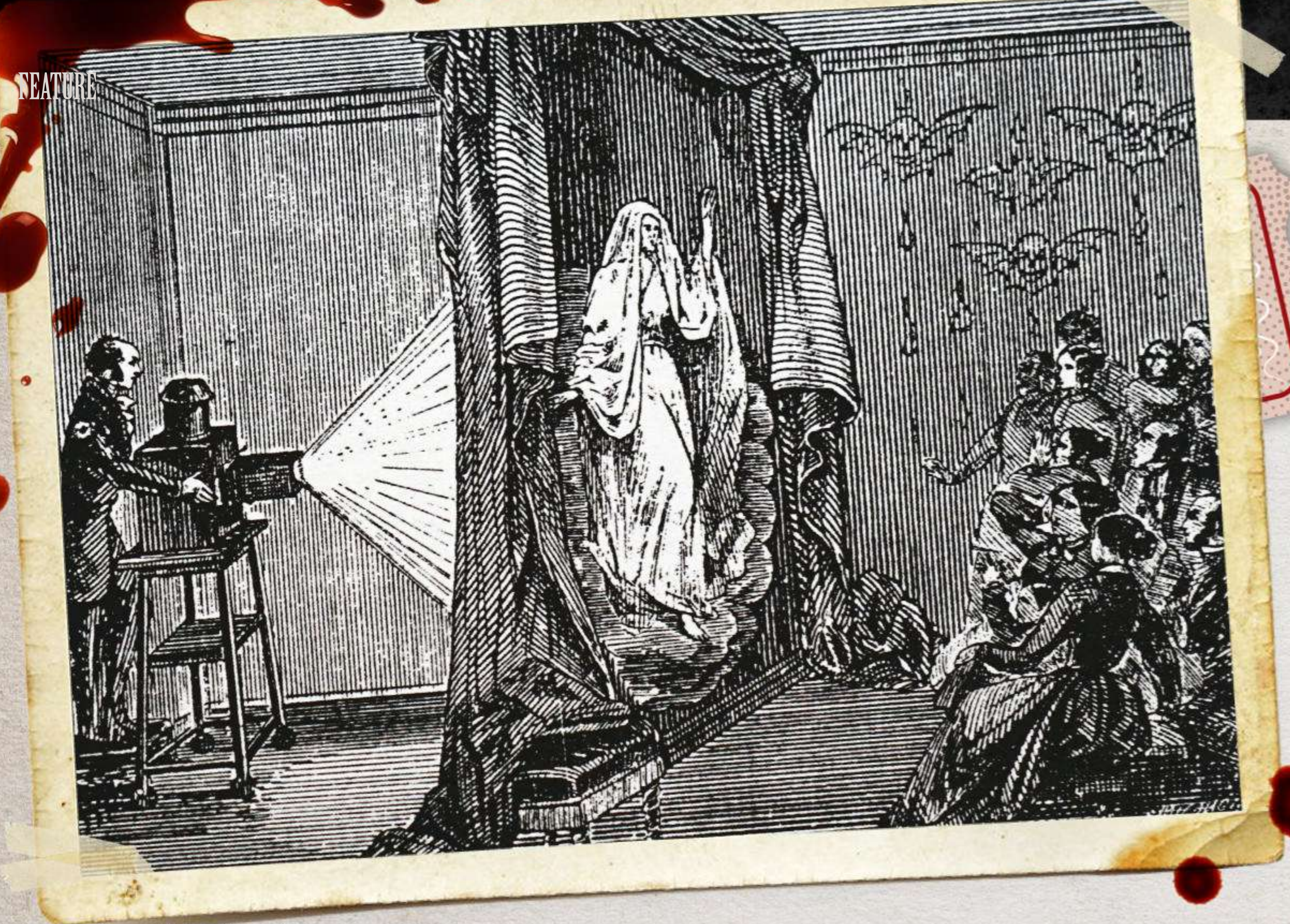
Seeking out spooky sites and situations is not a new phenomenon; in fact humanity has been scaring the bejesus out of one another for millenia. Telling tales of spots where the undead have arisen from their graves, or warning others about the monsters lurking in deep, dark waters are not a new phenomenon, nor is the instinct to go see for ourselves. From tales of ghosts haunting bathhouses in the first century, and terrifying biblical demons, to modern day fear surrounding Satanic cults and terrifying little green men appearing from outer space, we have forever been not only afraid of but utterly obsessed with the things that go bump in the night.

With so many imaginative stories of what could be hiding in the dark you'd think we actually enjoyed being scared... Well, it turns out we do. Studies have shown that fear gives us an adrenaline rush, and we are hardwired to crave and seek out releases of those feel-good hormones called endorphins – with a good horror movie leaving you feeling just as buzzed as a ten mile run. And if a book, tv show or movie can get our palms sweaty enough to feel satisfied, imagine what venturing into a real-life nightmare setting could do! Not only is feeling fright therapeutic, it is also addictive – just like the gym (or so they say...). We just can't get enough of scaring ourselves silly...

PARANORMAL POPULARITY

But it's not just fear that draws us to the supernatural, it offers an escape for many. Supernatural stories like *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* saga are two of the most popular franchises in the world and some of the highest grossing films of all time include the paranormal, from *E.T.* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* to *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Outside of fiction, we are in the midst of a paranormal boom, with witchcraft reaching mainstream media and attention, and many Gen Zers claiming abilities from reading auras and divination to plant communication. Meanwhile, ghost tours have grown so popular almost every town has one. One study has shown that our fascination with ghosts can help us to talk about the taboo of death, and haunted attractions often tackle the subject in a light-hearted manner. Not only that, but folklore stories can help bring to life the history of a place, educating us as well as providing stimulating entertainment, and inspiring many to take an interest in history.

Image source: Redvers at English Wikipedia



LEGEND TRIPPING

Legend Tripping is essentially a supernatural pilgrimage and one of the oldest and most culturally ingrained forms of haunted, or dark, tourism. In fact, haunted tourism is legend tripping. And chances are, even if you haven't set out to do it, you did it as a child. Remember when kids would dare each other to knock on the door of that eerie old house at the end of the street? Or make the journey down to the railway tracks where some poor youth allegedly lost his life? Writer Bill Ellis defines legend tripping as "an excursion to places where something uncanny has allegedly occurred with the intention of experiencing something supernatural". These places are usually creepy destinations that have been shrouded in lore for centuries, oftentimes they are cemeteries, bridges, caves, woods, or even houses. Attached to the spot is a local warning, perhaps the story of a victim who dared question the legend's credibility and met an unfortunate end. Legend tripping is perhaps the oldest form of tourism, too. A cave in Yorkshire, England, is the country's oldest tourist attraction – and it is all because of its legend: A real life witch and water that "petrifies" objects has captivated visitors since the 17th century (see more on page 111).

SIMULATED SPIRITS

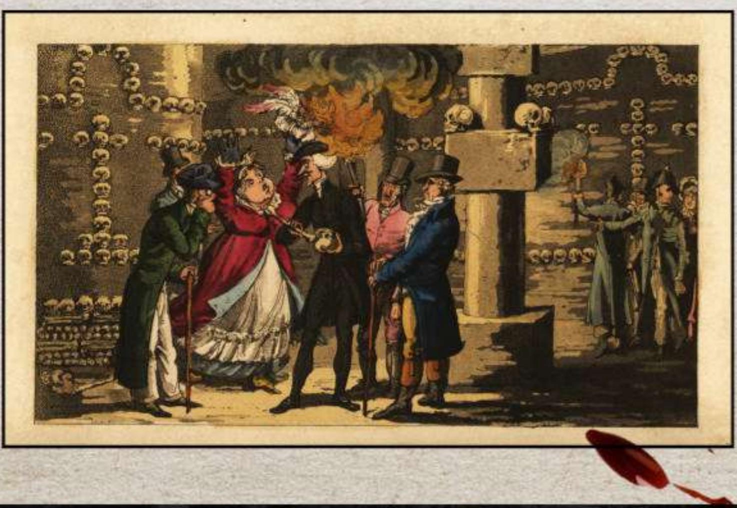
During the 19th century, appetites for spooky tourism reached its peak. The rise of spiritualism had audiences flooding to seances – while many were believed to be real, many others were later admitted to have been faked – as well as ghost story recitals and performances by magicians and psychics. People began seeking out spirits for themselves armed with new technology – photography. The establishment of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882 only cemented the fact that interest in the paranormal was considerable.

Savvy entertainers saw an opportunity to capitalise, leading to the rise of haunted attractions, such as the Orton and Spooner Ghost House, which opened in 1915 in Liphook, England. But these simulated frights were more akin to a fairground ride or the

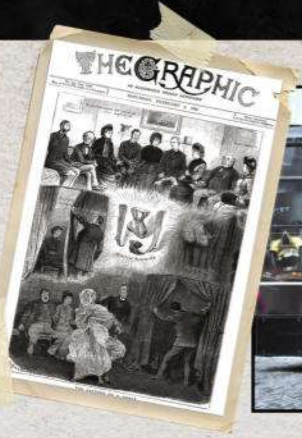
Top: An illustration of a phantasmogoria or magic lantern show in the 17th century

Left: The Black Angel monument in Oakland Cemetary, Iowa, is the subject of many a legend trip – kiss her lips and you are sure to die, unless you are a virgin

Right: An 1820 cartoon of an English couple mistaking the flaming torch of a Paris Catacombs tourguide for a ghost



earlier Phantasmogoria shows (an early form of immersive horror entertainment using magic lanterns and sensory simulation, often involving drugs and electric shocks) rather than a glimpse into the unknown. By the 20th century, Creepshows, travelling ghost shows and theatrical fortune tellers remained popular, and people even had a new kind of entertainment – cinema. But the urge to seek out real-life spooks wouldn't be scuppered.



THE GHOST BUS TOURS
EDINBURGH NECROBUS

Right: An issue of *The Graphic* weekly illustrated newspaper, circa 1880, featuring sketches of a Spiritualist séance held in London

Far right: A Ghost Bus comedy-horror sightseeing tour transporting tourists from haunted hotspot to haunted hotspot in Edinburgh

KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE

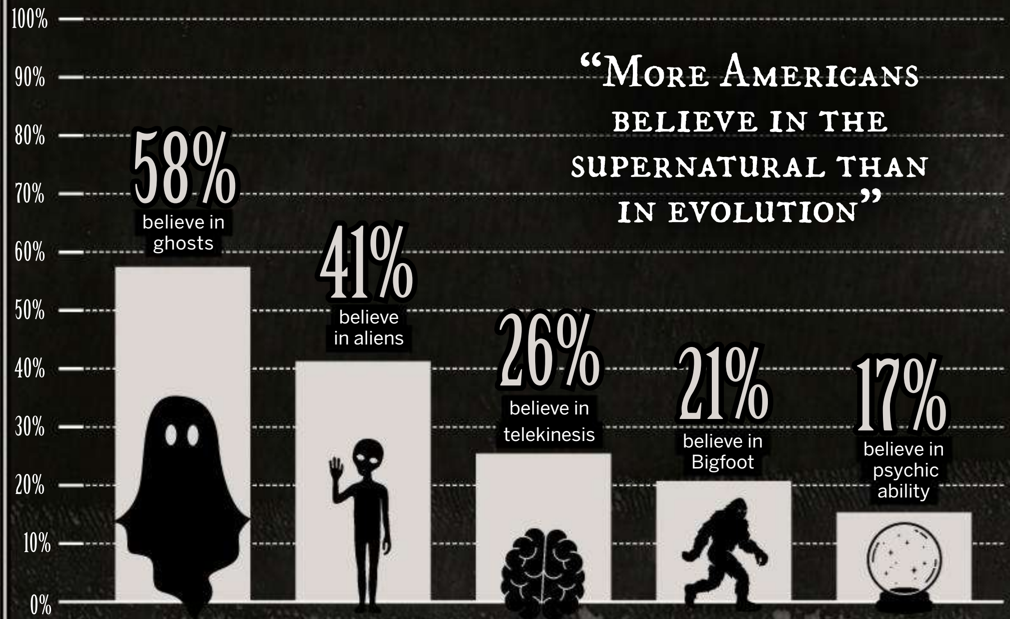
At the start of the 1900s, tours of historical houses across Europe, such as Hampton Court Palace, would include dark tales and ghostly legends, leading to merchandise, such as postcards featuring images of the property's ghosts, supposedly caught on camera. The spirit photography phenomenon encouraged tourism to spots where spirits had reportedly been snapped. The ghost of Lord Combermere, photographed in 1891 at Combermere Abbey in Cheshire draws interest to this day, and the Brown Lady of Raynham Hall (p16), captured in 1936 and published in *Country Life* magazine, still entices visitors to the stately home. By the 1990s, preservation societies had realised that many old buildings could attract visitors by capitalising on the buildings morbid and haunted history – subsequently funding the restoration and continued conservation of the property. Ohio State Reformatory (p60) was cited for demolition until the Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society purchased the prison for one measly dollar and began running ghost tours and offering ghost hunts and private paranormal investigations on the site. In 1994, Gettysburg (p102) began ghost tours specifically to help develop the town as a heritage tourist destination. Today, more and more historic properties are keeping legends alive, chronicling local folklore and educating the public about the paranormal and belief in it, all the while funding the maintenance of these significant sites of historical interest. So whether you believe in the supernatural or not, one thing is for sure – haunted tourism is here to stay, and it's an important aspect of historic preservation.

WE WANT TO BELIEVE

Mid-century anthropologist Anthony Wallace predicted that "belief in supernatural beings and in supernatural forces that affect nature without obeying nature's laws will erode and become only an interesting historical memory." But boy oh boy was he wrong. One recent study by Chapman University discovered that many Americans still believe in the paranormal, from the most common superstitions, such as haunted houses, to Bigfoot and soothsayers. In fact, more Americans believe in the supernatural than believe in scientific theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution, or that humanity has any impact on climate change.

Similar studies have shown that large proportions of people living in other scientifically advanced nations continue to believe in paranormal phenomena, with one UK study revealing a similar pattern of faith – over half of the British public believe in ghosts, and over 30 per cent are convinced aliens have visited.

> "More Americans believe in the supernatural than in evolution"



*The chart represents the beliefs of the 52% of Americans with paranormal beliefs.

SPELLBOUND SCHOLARS

Even the most enlightened minds of the 19th century believed in the supernatural. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a magical secret society that devoted itself to metaphysics and the occult had members such as poet William Butler Yeats and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (who was also a Spiritualist and believer in fairies).

Image source: Getty; Alamy

A FIELD GUIDE TO SPOOKS

When dipping your toe into the world of investigation, knowing what to look out for can be pretty overwhelming. Luckily, the most important tool of all is your own senses; what can you see, hear, smell? And of course, how does it make you feel? Here's what to look out for…

Written by Kate Cherrell

GHOSTS

Cold spots: Some of the most common sensations are sudden drops in temperature, indicating that a ghostly presence is nearby.

Feelings: Experiencing panic or sudden, extreme tiredness may signal that the spirits are sapping the energy of the living for themselves.

Smells: Foul smells are often reported where there are negative energies, whereas sweet, floral smalls often signal the arrival of a friendly spirit.

Visual indications: Many people report seeing dark shadows moving of their own accord, twinkling lights and 'orbs' Although be wary; if you find orbs in your photographs, they may just be insects, light refractions or dust particles.

CRYPTIDS

Tips: Take care! If you are looking for cryptids, be aware of your environment! If you're outside and looking for evidence, it may be easy to lose your footing and hurt yourself.

Know the local animals so that you can differentiate between potential cryptids and known species, and take a camera and notebook with you to keep track of any findings!

Footprints: Particularly large humanoid prints!

Noises: Listen out for calls, growls, screams or loud taps and booming thuds.

Biological evidence: Check for remnants left behind, such as hair or droppings.

UFOS

Tips: When looking for UFOs be sure to know flight paths and commercial air traffic routes. Knowing what should be in the skies is as important as knowing what shouldn't. Check your local UFO groups for hotspots, and remember to wrap up warm if you're planning on watching the sky at night.

WITCHCRAFT

Tips: Many ancient sites have been used by religions for thousands of years, so while you soak in the atmosphere, remember to be respectful – they may be sacred spaces.

Symbols: Keep an eye out for witch symbols and sigils (often stars, spirals, evil eyes) carved into rock or wood.

Feelings: Many report feelings of dread or just bad vibes when entering cursed or haunted sites. Alternatively, you might feel an ethereal sense of calm at magically-charged sites.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

PERFORMING A PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION

Investigating the paranormal can be fun and easy, but to enhance the experience, you may want to add a few items into your spooky toolkit

CAMERAS

Be sure to bring a camera or video camera with you on investigations. Not only can you capture snaps of any strange phenomena, but using a video camera means that you can revisit and analyse your investigation and see if you missed any evidence at the time.

DICTAPHONE

A voice recorder is a must for any budding investigator. You can record audio from your experiments and play it back later, or use recorders to communicate with spirits. If you pose a series of questions in a haunted location, you can instantly play back the audio, increase the volume and see if you captured any responses.

EMF METERS

EMF meters are devices that measure the electromagnetic frequency of an item or location. EMF, or K2, meters commonly have a series of coloured bulbs, which light up or sound an alarm when it measures spikes in energy. These can be used to detect the location of spirit energy, or ask ghosts to come closer to the device to signal yes/no answers.

SPIRIT BOXES

A spirit box or a radio hack is a small electronic device that quickly sweeps through radio waves and can be programmed to cycle faster, slower, or backwards. While the audio sounds like white noise, some believe that spirits can use these scrambled frequencies to communicate with the living – try slowing down the sound or shifting the frequencies.

SÉANCES

A séance can be as simple as sitting in a circle, clearing your mind and calling out, asking spirits to communicate. A spirit board, being a flat sheet with the alphabet and simple commands printed on it, can be an integral tool in any experiment. Placing your fingers gently on top of a pointer or glass, ghosts can be asked to move the glass across the board and spell words in response to your questions.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you'd like to learn more about the history of the paranormal, get involved with investigations and find out what modern research is being conducted, check out institutions such as The SPR, ASSAP and The Ghost Club.

HOUSES OF HORROR

Check out these haunted locations around the world and find out what makes them spooktacularly scary

Written by April Madden

with contributions from Melanie Clegg, Joanna Elphick and Mike Haskew

Image source: Getty; Alamy

THE ENFIELD HOUSE

Location: London, England, UK **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

There was obvious distress in Peggy Hodgson's voice when she called local police to her rented terrace home on 284 Green Street, where the single mother was raising four children.

As her kids prepared for bed that August evening in 1977, Peggy heard a strange noise upstairs. Thinking it was her daughters, 13-year-old Margaret and 11-year-old Janet, scuffling, she went to look and something terrifying happened. A heavy chest began sliding across the room, apparently without assistance. When Peggy began shoving it back, she met strong resistance from an unseen force. The chest moved a second time, faster. Aghast, Peggy and the girls fled.

When police officers arrived, they found nothing unusual – until they started to leave. Years later, one of them remembered a chair in the living room rising off the floor and moving across the room. After checking for wires and other unseen reasons for the episode, the police left. However, the Enfield Poltergeist did not. For months, the poltergeist wreaked havoc, apparently throwing objects and making noises.

As news of the phenomena leaked, sceptics accused the girls of being the source. In desperation, Peggy contacted the Society for Psychical Research. Two investigators, Guy Lyon Playfair and Maurice Grosse, responded, hiring a barrister, Mary Rose Barrington, to verify their research. During more than a year on the premises, the investigators recorded numerous incidents, including Playfair's encounter. He entered an upstairs room to find the entire Victorian-era fireplace ripped from the wall – hardly something the young girls were capable of.

Witnesses saw Janet levitate, and she was dragged by an unknown entity from her bedroom and down the stairs. She also broke into disturbing fits of cursing, and an eerie voice was heard coming from her. When investigators posed questions, the voice replied that it belonged to a man named Bill. A record search revealed that a man named Bill Wilkins had lived and died in the house.

Throughout the investigation, the girls were suspected of playing tricks, but they claimed that very few of the occurrences were their doing. Thirty years after the events subsided, Janet told an interviewer, "I know from my own experience that it was real. It lived off me, off my energy." Although the sceptics persist, the poltergeist activity in Enfield remains largely unexplained. Today, Enfield is still a residential home, so please do not disturb the current residents.

RAYNHAM HALL

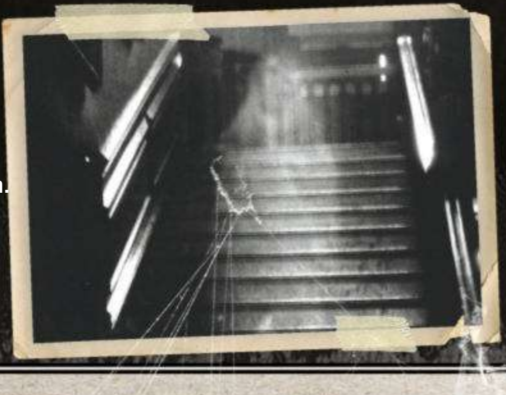
Location: Norfolk, England, UK **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

Although some have claimed that the famous photograph of a ghostly entity floating down the stairs of Raynham Hall is nothing more than a cunning fake, many more, including the renowned ghost hunter Harry Price, believe it to be the genuine article. Over the years the image has been reproduced in hundreds of books on the paranormal, but who is this luminary spectre and what is her story?

It is thought that the Brown Lady, so-called because of her chocolate-coloured brocade dress, is in fact the ghost of Lady Dorothy Walpole, the beautiful fun-loving second wife of Charles 'Turnip' Townsend. Despite having 11 children, it was an unhappy marriage, with Dorothy spending too much money on frocks and Charles unleashing his violent temper on a whim. When he discovered that his wife had had an affair with Lord Wharton before their marriage, Townsend locked his wife away.

Her death remains somewhat of a mystery. Whilst she officially died of smallpox, many claimed at the time that she had been pushed down the stairs. Others whispered that she had been starved to death. In truth, she most likely died of a broken heart, longing for the children she was taken away from.

Either way, shortly after her death, her ghost was spotted drifting along the landing and down the great staircase by servants and visitors alike. Others claimed to have seen her standing beneath her portrait in one of the bedrooms. It seemed that, contrary to her gentle nature in life, in death, Dorothy's spirit was cruel and malevolent, resulting in the rapid departure of many members of staff. No more the beautiful mistress of the house, this hideous entity stared out blankly with dark hollow sockets rather than her previous sparkling eyes.



Various famous guests, including King George IV, who refused to stay in 'this accursed house' ever again, and well-known author Captain Marryat, who fired a gun point-blank into her ghostly face, had terrifying encounters with her, but it wasn't until she was photographed by Captain Provand and Indra Shira that she became a true supernatural celebrity.

Today, Raynham Hall continues to be troubled by her restless spirit maniacally searching for her children. The sound of whispers in the picture gallery and the rustling of silk skirts on the main staircase still startle guests, whilst weighty chairs are known to move by themselves.

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Wikipedia Commons/ Jason McLaren

THE WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE

Location: San Diego, California, USA **Time zone:** UTC-8 **Currency:** US dollar

When gun magnate William Wirt Winchester, sole owner of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, died of tuberculosis in March 1881, he left his grieving widow, Sarah, with a half share in the family business as well as an enormous fortune of $20 million. According to legend, Sarah visited a spiritualist, where her husband's ghost told her that they had been cursed by the blood money that they had made from selling their rifles. The medium told her that in order to break the curse she needed to build a house for them all, but that as soon as she stopped building, the spirits would catch up with her and she would die.

Although the Winchesters had been based in Connecticut, in 1884 Sarah crossed the country to San Jose in California, where she had bought an eight-roomed farmhouse and 140 acres of land. Over the next 38 years, Sarah worked tirelessly on her complex building project, employing dozens of local craftsmen who were given daily instructions to add to the labyrinthine building

Alongside secret rooms, trap doors, staircases and doors that led nowhere, and other peculiar and pointless features, Sarah insisted that her house feature her favourite spiderweb motif as well as the number 13 to ward off the evil spirits. By the time she died in September 1922, her mysterious house was seven storeys high and incorporated 47 staircases and fireplaces, 2,000 doors, 10,000 windows and six kitchens. It's not known precisely how many rooms there are, but the closest estimate is 160.

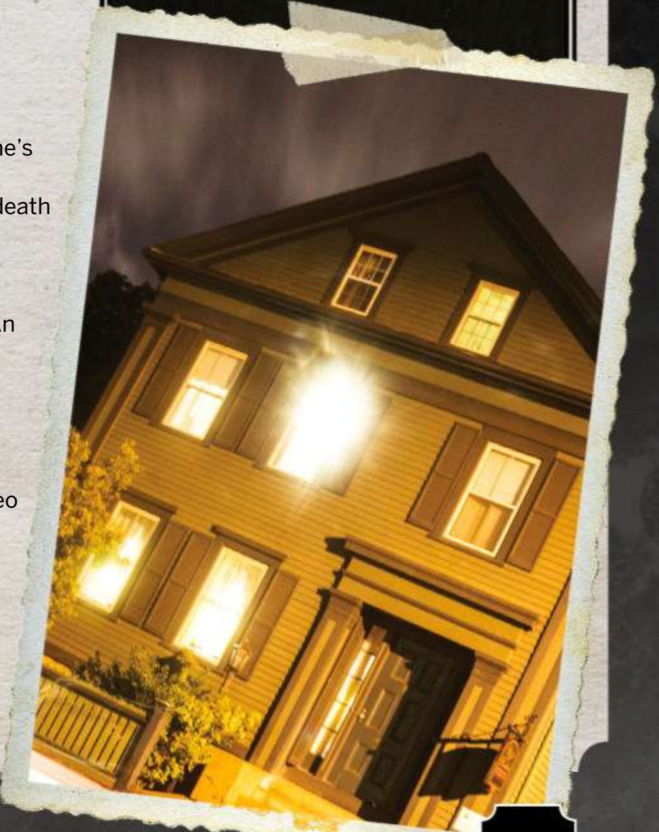
Within just a few months of her death, the house was opened to the public and although there have been no recorded sightings of ghosts, many have reported feeling extremely unsettled as they wander deeper into the labyrinth of rooms, especially on the third floor where Mrs Winchester's servants once lived, and where a few visitors have reported hearing disembodied footsteps and whispers.

LIZZIE BORDEN HOUSE

Location: Fall River, Massachusetts, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

At the end of the 19th century, all was not well in the Borden household in Fall River, Massachusetts. Wealthy but frugal widower Andrew Borden had remarried, his daughters Lizzie and Emma avoided their stepmother Abby, whom they believed had married their father for his money, and their late mother's brother John Morse was visiting to discuss some property issues on the fateful day of 4 August 1892. That was the day Andrew and Abby Borden were murdered with a hatchet.

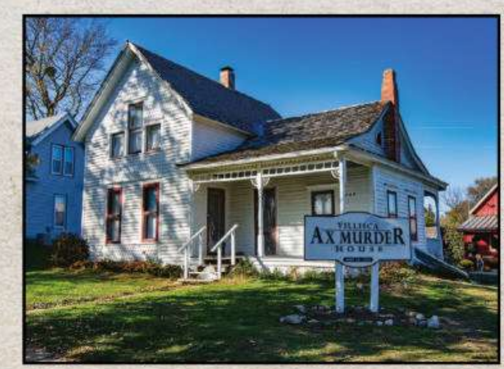
Lizzie was tried and acquitted of their murders and officially the mystery of their deaths has never been solved. The house at 230 2nd Street is now a bed and breakfast with its supposedly haunted rooms themed around the unsolved case – its most-requested room is the guest room where Abby Borden was killed. Accommodation and tours are available, including day tours and night-time ghost tours.



VILLISCA AX MURDER HOUSE

Location: Villisca, Iowa, USA **Time zone:** UTC-6 **Currency:** US dollar

In June 1912 the little city of Villisca, Iowa, was rocked by a brutal axe murder incident. In the watches of the night between 9 and 10 June, six members of the Moore family – parents Josiah and Sarah, their children Herman Montgomery (11), Mary Katherine (10), Arthur Boyd (7), and Paul Vernon (5), and Mary Katherine's friends Ina Mae (8) and Lena Gertrude Stillinger (12), were all bludgeoned to death with an axe belonging to Josiah, which was found in the spare room where the visiting girls had been staying. No one has ever been convicted of the crime. An itinerant minister lately of the church the Moores attended was tried twice and even confessed to the crime, but was acquitted due to mental illness. A number of paranormal investigations have been conducted, with photos, video and Electronic Voice Phenomena of its supposed haunting recorded by TV shows and YouTubers. Today the house at 508 E 2nd Street has been restored to its early 20th century condition, and functions as a museum. Day tours and group overnight stays are available.



THE AMITYVILLE HOUSE

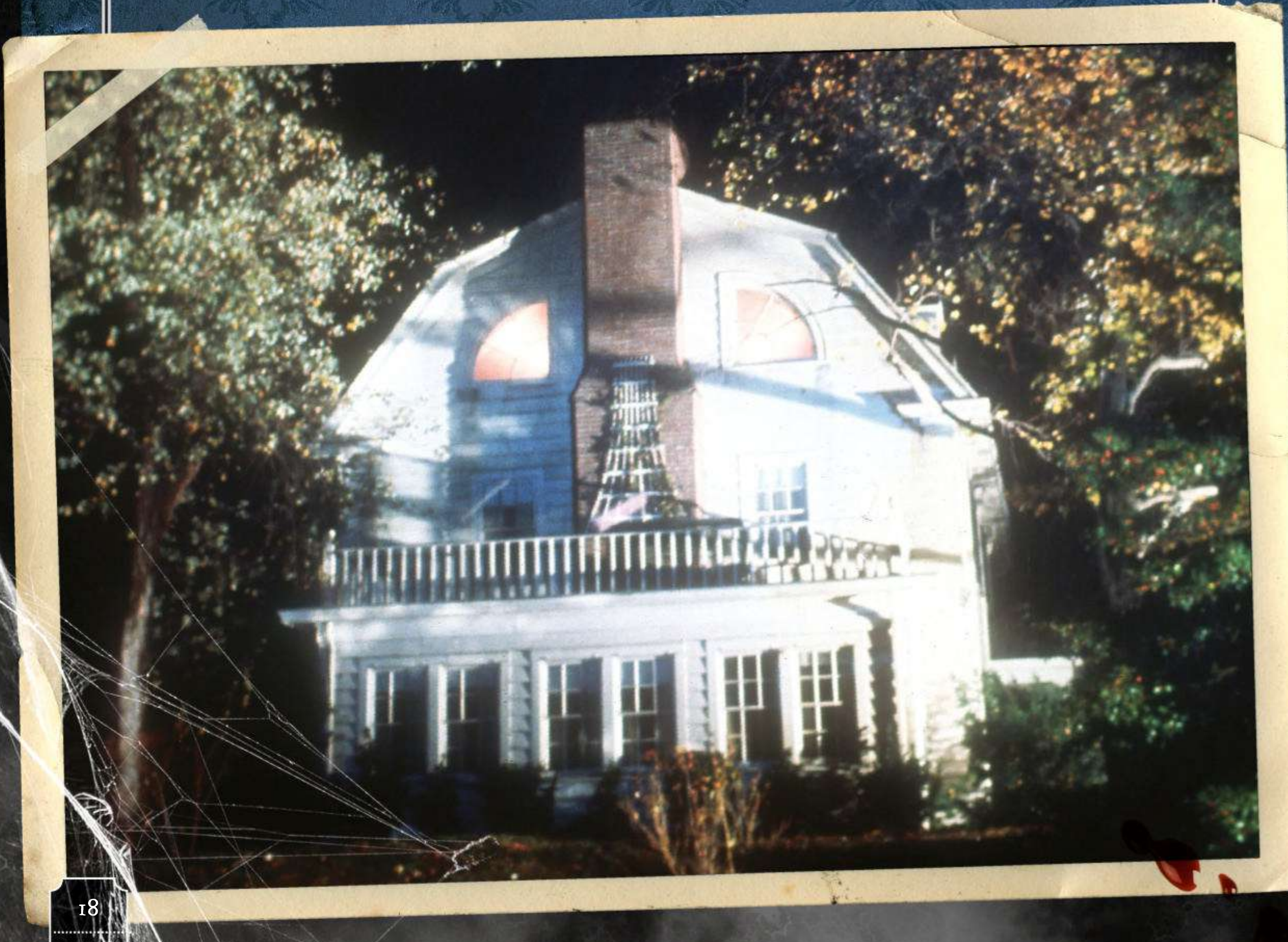
Location: Long Island, New York, USA Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

In 1977 a sensational book captured the world's attention. *The Amityville Horror* by Jay Anson would go on to inspire a series of books and films about what happened at 112 Ocean Avenue in New York's Long Island suburb of Amityville, both on the notorious night of 13 November 1974 and thereafter. The tale has been mired in legal wrangling and controversy ever since. It's worth noting that the house, once known as High Hopes, has had its address changed, and been renovated completely to alter or remove the iconic windows and other features familiar from book covers and movies. Its current owners and neighbourhood residents alike are very unhappy with its notoriety and tend to refuse requests to discuss the location or its alleged events. This is not a house you can, or should, turn up to for a visit.

The reason that the house turned this quiet Long Island suburb into a paranormal media circus starts with the mass murder of his entire family – both parents, two brothers, and two sisters – by Ronald DeFeo Jr in 1974. DeFeo was a hard drug user and had a volatile relationship with his family. He was convicted of shooting all six of them in their beds. Up until his own death in prison in 2021 (aged 69), DeFeo gave interviews and filed lawsuits alleging that other members of the family, friends, and even the Mafia were responsible for the killings.

A year after the murders, the Lutz family bought and moved into the house, which still contained much of the DeFeo family's furniture, and it's here where the story really begins. Anson's book recounts that a friend of the Lutzes, concerned by the account of the murders, advised them to have the house blessed. It goes on to state that a local Catholic priest (whose name is changed in the book to protect his privacy) arrived to perform a blessing, but claimed he heard spectral voices telling him to "get out". Then the so-called Amityville horror really began. The Lutz family fled the property after 28 days, having been subjected to what the book claims were paranormal phenomena including ectoplasm, cloven hoofprints, poltergeist activity and much more.

Subsequent contractors, buyers and residents have reported no paranormal activity at the house.



'THE CONJURING' HOUSE

Location: Harrisville, Rhode Island, USA
Time zone: UTC-5 **Currency:** US dollar

Known to locals and to the Perron family that lived there as the Old Arnold Estate, this Rhode Arnold farmhouse dates back to around 1736. It's the inspiration for *The Conjuring*, the first movie in the franchise of the same name, which takes as its inspiration the cases of hauntings and demonic possession investigated by self-described demonologists and mediums Ed and Lorraine Warren. After experiencing unsettling paranormal events during the 1970s, the Perron family called the Warrens in to investigate. The Warrens claimed they discovered a horde of unquiet spirits, the worst of which was the ghost of former resident Bathsheba Sherman, whose gravestone dated 1812-1885 (not the movie's 1849) can be found in a graveyard in nearby Harrisville. Legend now paints Bathsheba as an evil witch who murdered babies with pins. Whatever the historical veracity of the allegations, The Conjuring house now leans into its horror story with tours and ghost hunter-led investigations, including overnight events. It has a strict bookings-only policy.

THE BILLOP HOUSE

Location: Staten Island, New York, USA **Time zone:** UTC-5 **Currency:** US dollar

Known variously as the Conference House and the Bentley Manor, this Staten Island residence was home to several generations of the Billopp family. In the late 18th century, one of them, Christopher Billopp, was secretly a colonel in the British loyalist forces during the American Revolution. He allowed his home to be used to tend to injured redcoats (British soldiers). Those that died were buried swiftly in unmarked graves. One evening, thinking that a servant girl was an American spy, Billop threw the girl down the stairs; her body met the same fate as the deceased redcoats. Today, it's thought that both she and innumerable British soldiers haunt the house. Now a museum, visits and guided tours are available during the museum's open season at limited times during weekends – although it should be noted that it focuses on its American Revolution history, not its paranormal associations.

MYRTLES PLANTATION

Location: St Francisville, Louisiana, USA
Time zone: UTC-6
Currency: US dollar

Once called the most haunted house in America, Myrtles Plantation is a paranormal triple threat. Allegedly built on a Native American burial ground, the site of at least one verified murder as well as a sinister poisoning, and a notorious hub of African American plantation slavery to boot, it also boasts a spectral bloodstain that can apparently never be cleaned, a possessed mirror, and a voodoo-practising ghost. Leaning into its horrific haunted history, it offers accommodation, day and evening tours (both public and private), a coffee shop, and a restaurant specialising in Southern food.

> "Once called the most haunted house in America, MyrtlesPlantation is a paranormal triple threat"

THE CARL BECK HOUSE

Location: Penetanguishene, Ontario, Canada
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: Canadian dollar

This elegant Victorian Queen Anne Revival house was one of the finest in its town when it was built by lumber magnate and town mayor Carl Beck. One of the town's first families, the Becks were nine strong, and when Carl's wife died it was left to Mary, his eldest daughter, to raise her siblings. But despite Carl's much-vaunted wealth, he was a philanthropist who helped to establish churches and schools, and was famous for owning the town's first car, a 1903 Oldsmobile which is now in a local museum. At his death he left Mary just a single dollar. Understandably, she was angry, which is perhaps what gave rise to the legend that she now haunts the house. But she's apparently not the only one – paranormal investigators claim that up to 18 spirits are resident and that they creak floorboards, slam doors, whisper insults and pull visitors' hair. Mary and some of her ghostly friends are even said to promenade nearby Church Street dressed in their Victorian best. Despite its unfriendly spectral residents, however, the Carl Beck House is a magnet for visitors, and the apartment on the top floor is available for rent on AirBnB – search for 'The Haunted House Apt 302'.

MONTE CRISTO HOMESTEAD

Location: Junee, NSW, Australia **Time zone:** UTC+10 **Currency:** Australian dollar

The story of Christopher Crawley and his family is a rags-to-riches one. Frontier farmers in Junee, New South Wales, in the mid-1800s, the Crawleys lived in a simple slab cottage, until Christopher got rich off the coming of the railway. The family moved into their luxurious new homestead in 1885, and their previous home became the servants' quarters. Living in those servants' quarters were two maids, both of whom Christopher Crawley got pregnant. One killed herself, the other bore her child, who later was left brain-damaged after being hit by a coach, and was kept chained, first in the homestead's coach house, and then to his mother's bed. The maids, along with Christopher Crawley, who died of sepsis, and his wife, who shut herself in her attic chapel for decades after his death, are believed to haunt the property, along with a stable boy who died in a fire, a Crawley granddaughter who was dropped down the stairs, and a caretaker who was shot dead. Today the house bills itself as Australia's most haunted. daytime tours (weekends only) and specialist overnight ghost tours are available.

HOUSE OF LAMENTS

Location: Guanajuato City, Guanajuato, Mexico **Time zone:** UTC-6 **Currency:** Mexican peso

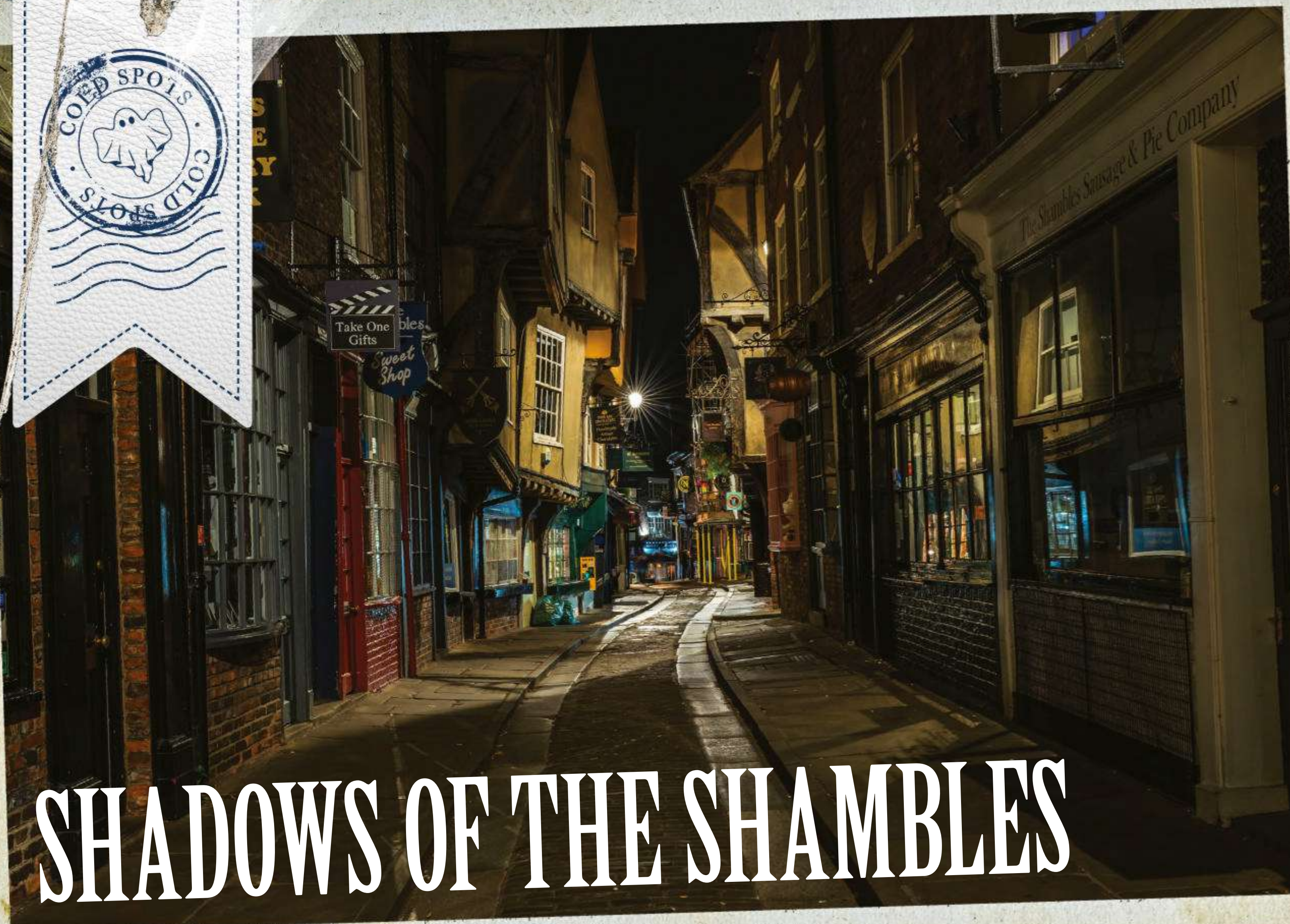
The Casa de los Lamentos, or House of Laments, is a pretty little 18th century Spanish Baroque mansion in Guanajuato city in Mexico. Here, in the 1890s, lived mining engineer Tadeo Fulgencío Mejía and his adored wife Maria Constanza de la Riviera. After an economic crisis at the mine he worked at led manual workers to blame Mejía for their late pay, a gang of disgruntled miners turned up at the house and stabbed Maria Constanza to death. The murder sent Mejía mad. He visited a local bruja, or witch, who told him of black magic rituals he could perform in order to contact his departed love. Mejía became a serial killer, sacrificing his victims in a bloody attempt to reconnect with his beloved and secreting their remains in the basement. When he realised police were onto him, he shot himself. Now the House of Laments is a museum to the grisly tale and filled with 19th century housewares, collections of uniquely Mexican magical artefacts, and photos of the tragic couple. You can visit on most days and tours are available.

Image source: Getty, Alamy

ROSE HALL GREAT HOUSE

Location: Montego Bay, St James, Jamaica **Time zone:** UTC-5 **Currency:** Jamaican dollar

Jamaica's most famous house is Rose Hall, an iconic Georgian style plantation mansion. Set in idyllic grounds, it is home to an 18-hole golf course named after the estate's ghostly White Witch. The story goes that Annie (or Annee) Palmer, born to English and Irish parents, was orphaned, and raised by a Black nanny who taught her dark magic and voodoo. She then used this to murder her unfortunate husband John Palmer when she moved into his home, Rose Hall. Not content with that, she plied her deadly sorcery on two subsequent husbands as well as a series of male slaves that she preyed upon, until she was killed herself by a powerful magician named Takoo. Legend says that she now haunts Rose Hall, riding her horse around the grounds or appearing on balconies. Unfortunately for ghost hunters, it seems that legend has had a little help from fiction in the shape of the 1929 novel *The White Witch of Rosehall* by Herbert G de Lisser. The gorgeous Rose Hall Great House, however, is happy to offer day and night tours about the legend along with its other amenities.



SHADOWS OF THE SHAMBLES

Founded in 71AD, the city of York has been at the centre of a rich, varied and often brutal history

Location:
York, Yorkshire, England, UK

Time zone:
UTC+0

Currency:
Pound sterling

Tips: Book yourself on one of York's legendary ghost tours, you won't be disappointed!

York was the capital of the Roman province Britannia Inferior, and a seat of military power through the ages, having been invaded by the Vikings, the Normans and decimated during the Civil war. The unrest and bloodshed within the city walls have understandably lead to York's reputation as the most haunted city in Britain.

York's haunted pubs continue to be a huge draw for spooky tourists, with the Golden Fleece being the subject of books, documentaries and TV shows on matters of the supernatural. Home to no less that 15 separate ghosts, the 16th century drinking house is a narrow and quaint building, filled with (modern) death masks, memorial skulls and spirits by the bucketload. One of the most infamous ghostly residents of the Fleece is Lady Anne Peckett, the wife of Lord Mayor John Peckett, who is frequently seen floating up and down the pub's staircase, moving things around the building, staking her claim as the lady of the house. A WWII Canadian airman is said to still haunt the upper floors after he fell, or was pushed, from a third-storey window, dying on the pavement below. Most famous of all is the spirit of a small boy who, in the 19th century, was trampled by horses pulling a brewers cart. He is still seen today across the pub's lower floors, playing and tugging at the shirts of patrons.

Across the road from the Golden Fleece is The Shambles, York's ancient shopping district with some of the best preserved medieval streets in Europe. Throughout these winding,

YORK GHOST MERCHANTS

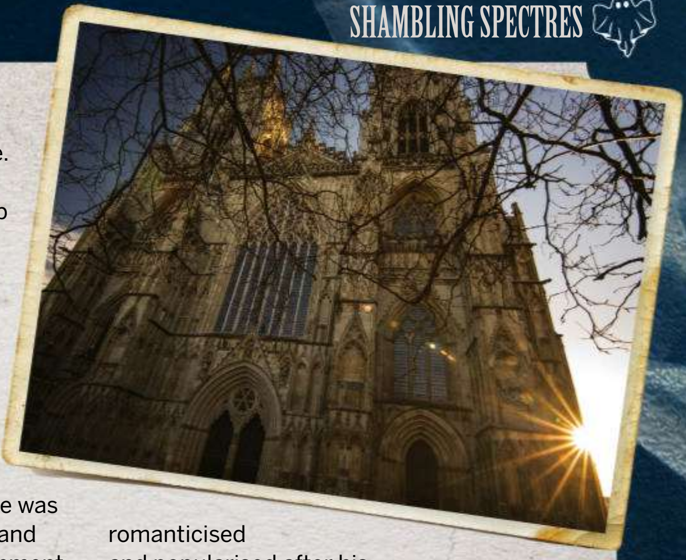
No. 6 The Shambles

Founded by 'The Sorrowful Guild of Master Ghost Makers', York Ghost Merchants is undoubtedly the strangest shop in York. The magical little shop sells one item only: ghosts. Rather than offering spirits in bottles, the ghosts on offer are small, handmade spectres adorned with makers marks that bring a little of York's spookiness back to your home. Much like humans in life, no two ghosts are the same, and picking the right ghost for you is a tough, but exciting task. Since going viral on social media, queues for the Ghost Merchants can last for hours at a time, so make sure to arrive early to avoid disappointment.

THE YORK GHOST MERCHANTS

cobbled lanes, you pass by the most haunted house in York at 35 Stonegate. A house is said to have stood here for over 1000 years, with the modern shop containing ghosts from the breadth of the millennium. Tucked away past the hustle and bustle of little shops, ghost walks and magic-themed bars is a tiny, peaceful shrine to Margaret Clitherow. Margaret Clitherow was born in 1556 and met her grizzly end in 1586, sentenced to death for harbouring Catholic priests in her home, a capital offence at the time. She was taken to the toll booth at Ouse Bridge and 'pressed to death'. This barbaric punishment involved her own door being placed on top of her and slowly laden with huge stones that crushed her body, resulting in a long and painful death. She was canonised in 1970 and is celebrated across York today as a martyr for her beliefs.

However, York's most famous grave belongs to a highwayman, brought into legendary status through stories of fanciful and daring deeds. Dick Turpin was a highwayman and horse thief whose story was romanticised and popularised after his execution in 1739. The Victorians loved tales of the lovable rogue, and his name can be found across many buildings and streets in York. While the church adjoining the graveyard is long gone, and all other stones laid flat or removed, the grave of Dick Turpin can be found by Lead Mill Lane on the outskirts of the city. While the headstone didn't appear until nearly two centuries after his death, his memorial is a must-see for any spooky tourist in search of a darker history.



> "The unrest and bloodshed within the city walls have understandably lead to York's reputation as the most haunted city in Britain"

Golden Fleece

THE HOUSE OF TREMBLING MADNESS

42 Stonegate

While York is not short of haunted watering holes, the House of Trembling Madness offers a drinking and dining experience unlike no other. Once a Norman house in 1180 AD, this medieval drinking den offers a huge range of craft ales and absinthe as well as a unique space to chill out in the old city with cluttered walls and taxidermy that leers from the ancient exposed timbers.

Images source: Getty; Alamy; Geograph

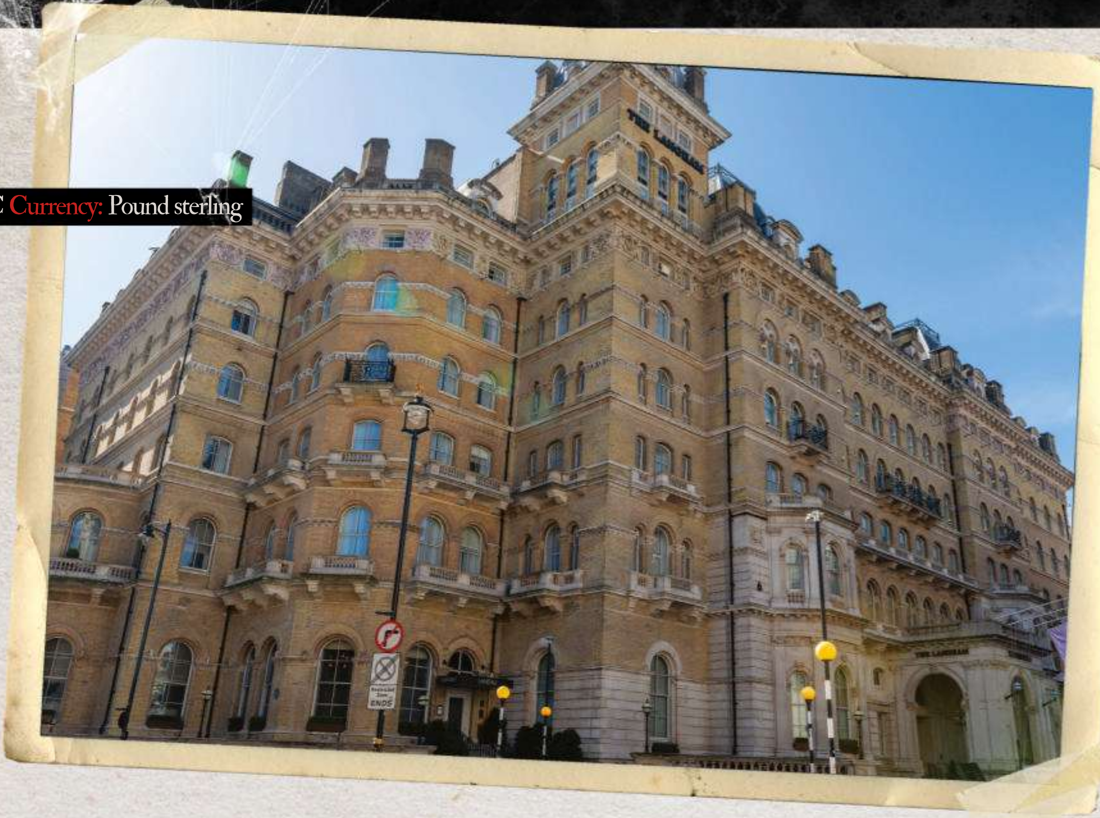
SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN

Don’t like to sleep alone? Check into one of these haunted hotels,
and you might find your room already occupied...

Image source: Getty; Alamy

THE LANGHAM

Location: London, England, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling



Situated just off Oxford Street, the 1865-built Langham is one of London's top 5-star retreats. But attempt to bed down for the night, and you might be in for a spooky surprise. Plenty of spectres haunt the halls, including former high-profile guests Emperor Napoleon III, and a German prince who committed suicide by leaping from the hotel's fourth floor. However, the most malevolent ghost resides in room 333.

Every October, the ghost of a honeymooning Victorian doctor who murdered his new wife – then killed himself – is said to stalk anyone brave enough to stay in this room. Take the terrified BBC journalist, James Alexander Gordon, who in 1973 saw a bright green ball of light that slowly morphed into the shape of the Victorian doctor. He hastily fled, before returning with a colleague, who corroborated Gordon's tale. The ghost doctor's most recent appearance was in 2014, when it freaked out members of the England cricket team. Apparently, one player even awoke in the middle of the night, and went to sleep in the room of his teammate!

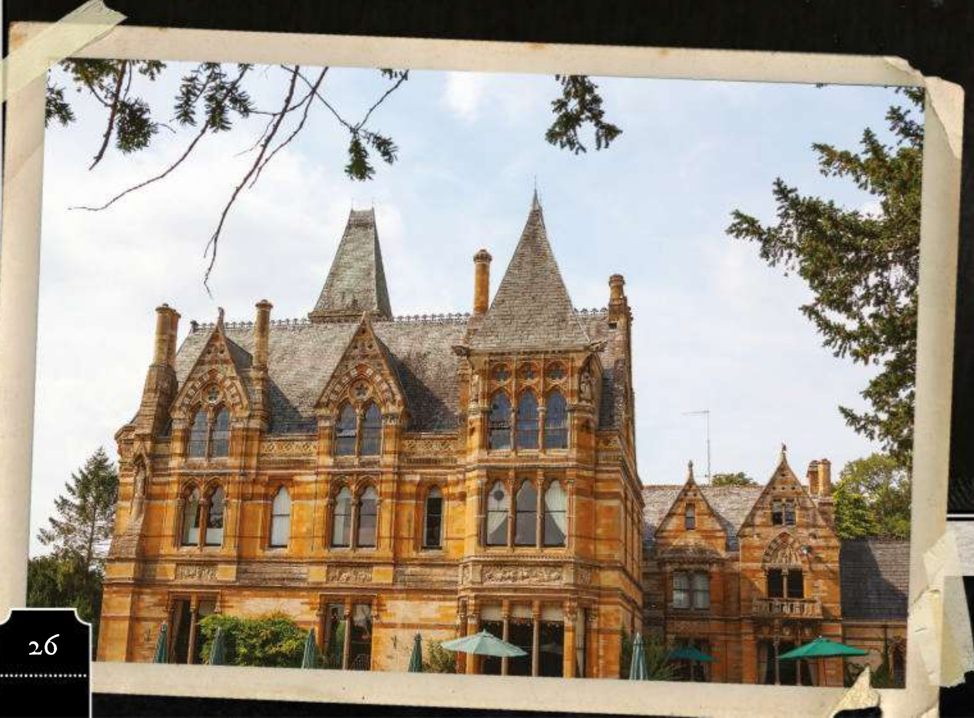
Above: The Langham Hotel sits in All Souls Place, and was once owned by the neighbouring BBC: one particular journalist had quite the fright

> "Attempt to bed down for the night and you might be in for a spooky surprise!"

ETTINGTON PARK HOTEL

Location: Stratford-upon-Avon, England, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

The Ettington Park Hotel stands on storied ground. Initially used as the site of a Roman villa, the aristocratic Shirley family owned the land since the time of the Domesday book. The Shirleys constructed the present neo-Gothic house in the mid-19th century, now used as the luxurious Ettington Park Hotel. However, the AA not only awarded it a 4-star rating but dubbed it "Britain's most haunted hotel". Guests have reported seeing a prim Victorian lady strolling past the conservatory entrance. In the library, the ghost of a man pets his spirit dog. Former night manager Michael Kenny had even more to report: over his five-year nocturnal stewardship of the hotel, he witnessed candles floating all by themselves and the spectre of a servant girl, who is said to have died falling down the hotel's grand staircase. Weirdest of all the paranormal goings-on is a toad found buried alive in the walls in 1859. Workmen deduced that it could only have got there during the last spell of building work in 1740, which would have made the toad 119 years old. How did the little amphibian live so long without light, oxygen, food, or water? If only the walls could talk...



Left: The glorious Victorian pile designed by architect John Prichard is less appealing at night...

FAIRMONT BANFF SPRINGS

Location: Banff, Alberta, Canada Time zone: UTC-7 Currency: Canadian dollar

This hotel is as iconic as the lake it so scenically overlooks. Canada's 'Castle in the Rockies' has been pampering its guests for 130 years. It's also home to a few special guests who couldn't bring themselves to check out – not just of their hotel, but of life itself.

You'll see plenty of happy newlyweds on a romantic retreat here, but if you stand in the hotel's staircase long enough, you might see the figure of a tearful bride that never made it to the altar. Local lore has it that a couple in the 1920s had organised a wedding in the hotel. However, as the bride descended the stairs in her grand gown, she was startled by something, tripped, and fell. The woman died, and spooked guests claim to have seen her phantom holding the bannister rail, waiting for her beloved bridegroom to this day.

Some staff of days gone by have also left a piece of themselves in the hotel, providing service with a silent smile. Sam McAuley, a former bellhop from Scotland, still potters about the hotel, faithfully carrying out his duties – from pacing up and down his former office (now a guest room) to opening locked doors. Perhaps today's guests should think twice before ordering room service…

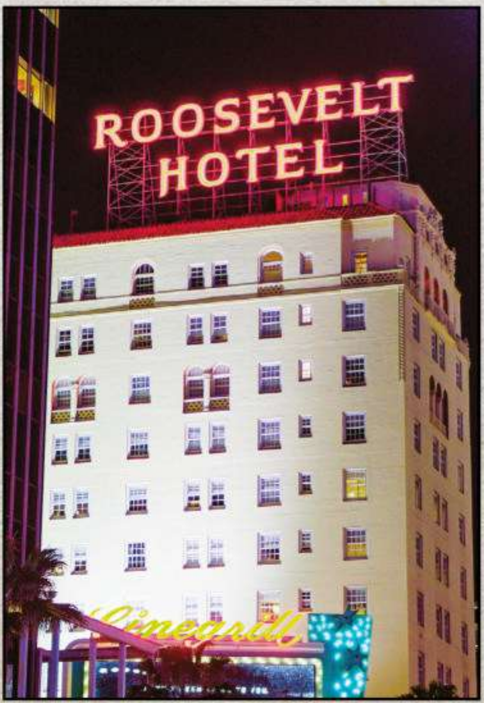
THE ROOSEVELT

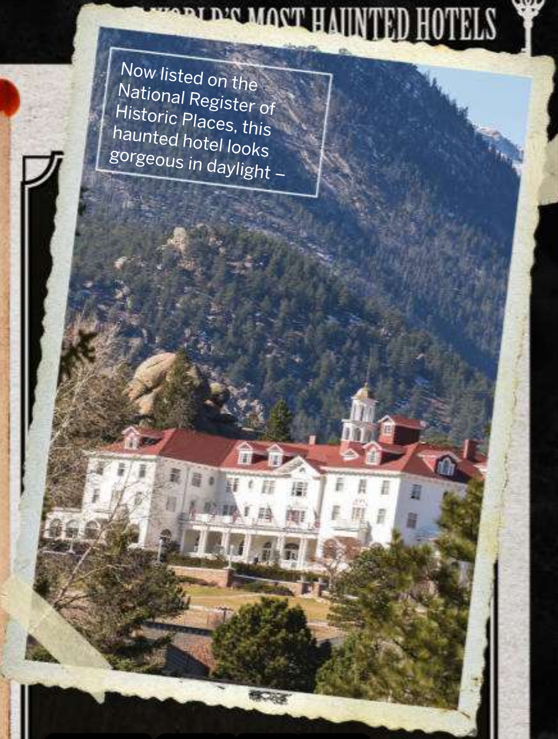
Location: Los Angeles, California, USA Time zone: UTC-8 Currency: US dollar

The Roosevelt is LA's longest-operating hotel. The towering landmark opened in 1927, at the height of America's gilded party age. Hollywood's high flyers breezed through its Spanish-style lobby, swam in its pretty pool, and stayed up all night in its 300 glamorous rooms. If you're a film fanatic, you're in luck: the ghosts of a few stars have been known to make a cameo.

Marilyn Monroe filmed her first advert in the hotel swimming pool. As her career reached new heights, she frequented one of the hotel's pool cabanas, which was installed with a full-length mirror. Some time after the actress' death, a maid was cleaning the room, and a glum blonde bombshell appeared in the mirror. The maid whipped around, but there was nobody standing there…

And what about the muffled sound of the bugle, emanating from room 928? Apparently, that's the ghost of Academy Award nominee Montgomery Clift, who is still practising for his role as an army trumpeter in 1953's *From Here To Eternity*.





Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this haunted hotel looks gorgeous in daylight –

THE STANLEY

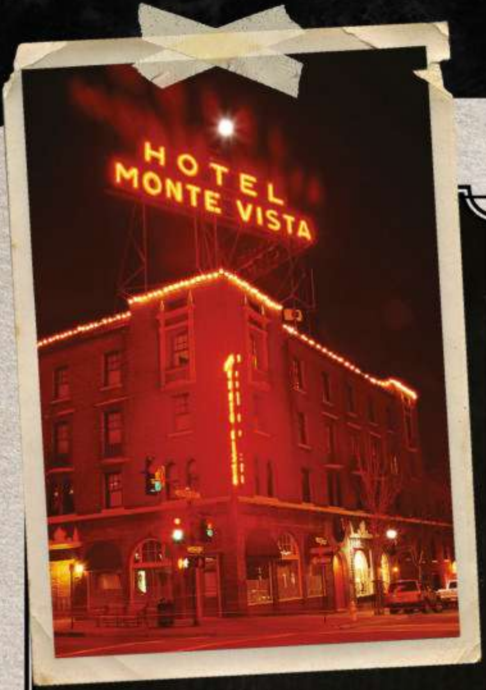
Location: Estes Park, Colorado, USA
Time zone: UTC-7
Currency: US dollar

Want to guarantee yourself a poor night's sleep? Book a night in The Stanley – an inspiration for Stephen King's *The Shining*, touted as the state's most haunted hotel. Seems strange that this dreamy 1909-built Rockies resort might actually be a nightmare, but if you feel the cool touch of a transparent hand, or hear the soft moans of troubled spirits, you'll probably want to get packing, stat.

There's barely a spot in The Stanley that isn't said to be haunted. Stephen King stayed in room 217, where the ghost of a chambermaid tidies guests' belongings while they sleep. In 428, there's a cowboy, and in 401, there's a malicious male ghost. Other ghosts are said to wander the property, including the hotel's founder, Freelan Oscar Stanley, who died of tuberculosis shortly after opening his business. Oh, and did we mention the on-site pet cemetery, where some of the beloved dogs and cats of days gone by slink about?

Thankfully, The Stanley isn't afraid of its haunted reputation. The hotel hosts regular seances, and offers not one, but two ghost tours: one of them is even *The Shining*-themed.

Image source: Getty; Alamy



HOTEL MONTE VISTA

Location: Flagstaff, Arizona, USA
Time zone: UTC-7
Currency: US dollar

Dying to hear about the paranormal activity at Flagstaff's Hotel Monte Vista? Just ask the staff – each housekeeper, porter, cook and waiter has a story to tell. There's the one about the dancing couple in the cocktail lounge, locked in a ghostly embrace as they whirl around the floor. Or the baby in the basement, which torments passers-by with its elusive cries.

The best apparition the Monte Vista plays host to, however, is to be found in the bar (where all good stories begin). In 1970, a trio of criminals robbed a nearby bank. They just about evaded capture, but one bandit was shot while they escaped. Despite one of their number being wounded, the gang stopped in the Monte Vista's bar to celebrate – where, unfortunately, the man with the gunshot wound bled to death.

That hasn't stopped him from being cheerful in the afterlife. Both customers and staff have reported being startled by jolly, disembodied chants of "Good morning!" while barstools and drinks have been known to move on their own. Coincidence… or ghoulish crime caper?

RMS QUEEN MARY

Location: Los Angeles, California, USA **Time zone:** UTC-8 **Currency:** US dollar

On the day of her launch in 1934, English psychic Lady Mabel Fortescue-Harrison predicted the luxury transatlantic liner would "know her greatest fame and popularity when she never sails another mile". The clairvoyant was right – since becoming a land-based hotel, the RMS Queen Mary has become one of LA's quirkiest tourist attractions. Voted one of the most haunted places in all America, a gaggle of ghosts occupy the ship. One fateful night in 1948, a third-class passenger staying in Stateroom B340 apparently died in mysterious circumstances; guests have felt his presence at the end of their bed, even pulling off the covers as they slept. There's also the 18-year-old crewman, crushed to death by a door in 1966, whose spirit whistles through the corridors. Get to know the ghouls better by booking onto one of the ship's paranormal tours, if you're not afraid of the dark. You can 'dine with the spirits'; an experience that includes a bite to eat in the award-winning Sir Winston's Restaurant, before exploring below deck on a haunted history tour. Or, if you dare, take part in a ghost hunt with a paranormal investigator, which visits places even the hotel guests are forbidden to go.

THE RUSSELL HOTEL

Location: Sydney, NSW, Australia **Time zone:** UTC+11 **Currency:** Australian dollar

Although it has served time in previous lives as a convict hospital and sailor's hostel, the Russell Hotel is now a boutique accommodation stalwart in Sydney's old-timey The Rocks neighbourhood. It offers phenomenal harbourside views from the rooftop garden, a cosy sitting room stuffed with books, and direct access to Sydney's oldest pub on the ground floor.

However, a night in Room 8 might not be quite so relaxing. The story goes that an unknown sailor was murdered in that room by a prostitute, and his vengeful ghost likes to make his presence known: but only to solo female travellers. Even the staff are spooked, as some claim to have heard his heavy footsteps thudding on the creaky wooden floor. Checking into this room is definitely not recommended for the faint of heart.

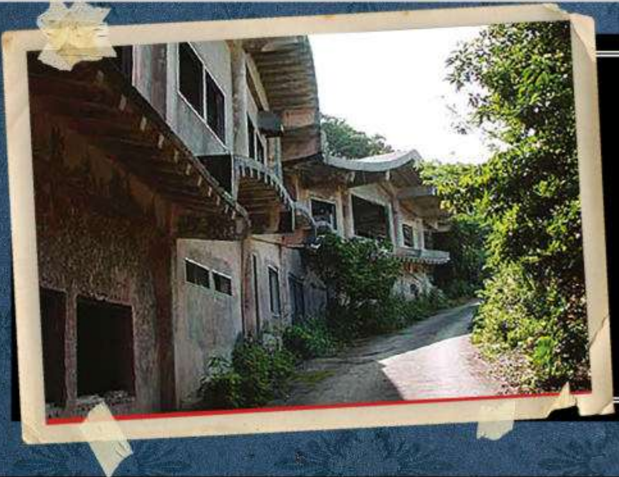
THE RUSSELL
HOTEL

THE SAVOY HOTEL

Location: Mussoorie, India **Time zone:** UTC+5:30 **Currency:** Indian rupee

India's hill stations, in the foothills of the Himalayas, are cloaked in both mist and mystery: the Savoy Hotel in lush Mussoorie is no different. Built in 1902, the English Gothic luxury retreat has had many famous folk sleep in its beds, from British colonising officers to Indian leader of the Nationalist movement, Jawaharlal Nehru. However, we'd say the hotel's most (in)famous guest is the spectre of Frances Garnett-Orme, a spiritualist who came to stay in 1911, but was found dead in her bed.

Investigations revealed that the spiritualist had been poisoned with cyanide. Garnett-Orme's companion was suspected of the poisoning, but was acquitted. However, the plot thickened; the doctor who examined Garnett-Orme was also found poisoned a few months later. The case was never cracked, but it captured the attention of British author Rudyard Kipling, who relayed the story to then-aspiring writer Agatha Christie. She penned Poirot's first adventure, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), based on the murder at Mussoorie.



TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Location: Okinawa, Japan **Time zone:** UTC+9 **Currency:** Japanese yen

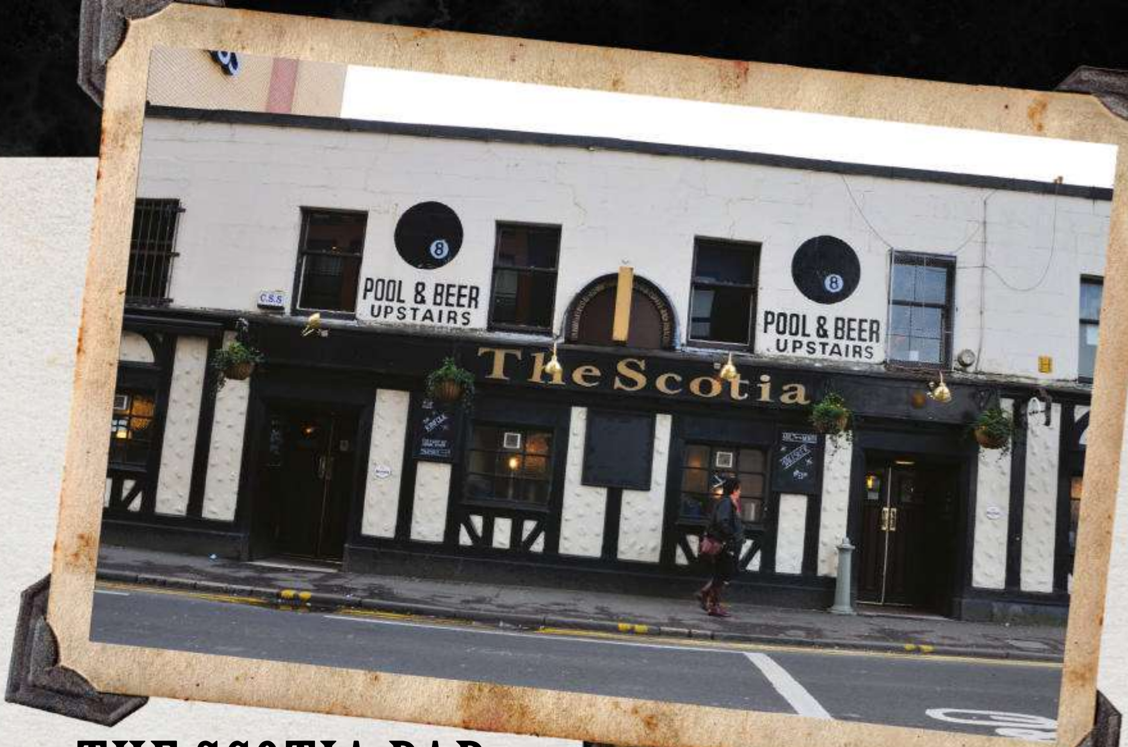
The wind-whipped ruins of the Nakagusuku Hotel had a stunning vantage point over Okinawa, Japan's subtropical island paradise. However, the hotel was never actually completed. While it was being constructed in the 1970s, investors had failed to listen to the advice of local townspeople and monks, who warned that building over ancient tombs and crypt-like caves would have consequences. Believing the project to be cursed, workers threw down their tools. In an effort to allay fears, a businessman involved in the project went to sleep in the soon-to-be hotel: however, after just three days, it was reported he went mad, and disappeared. The hotel was never finished, and it sat derelict until being totally demolished in 2020.

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Nick Kenrick

RAISE YOUR SPIRITS!

Whatever spirit you choose to chase, the UK's most haunted watering holes are sure to whet any serious ghost hunters' appetite. From the crags of Scotland, through the moors of England and into the mountains of Wales, explore the haunted mainland of the British isles the way our ancestors intended – with a pint in hand!

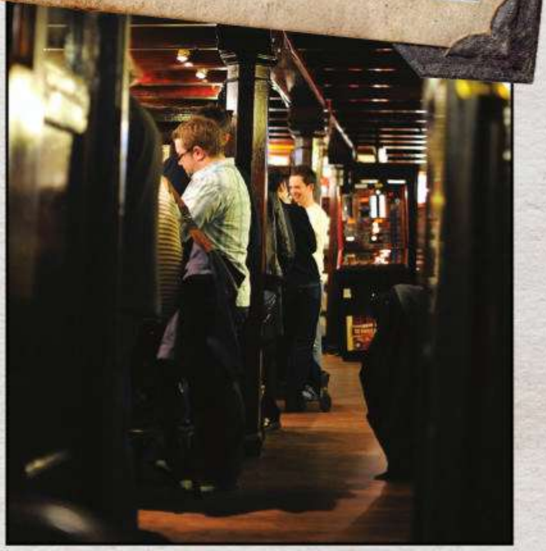
Written by Tanita Matthews



THE SCOTIA BAR

Location: Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland

1 Standing proud on Stockwell Street since 1792, Glasgow's oldest surviving pub is home to a host of notable ghosties. Thought to be haunting this famous watering hole is a woman named Annie who moves glasses across the table. The pub's landlord has also reported seeing the ghost of a young child playing in a doorway. But most will recognise the name of the pub for the famous Green Lady, said to be a former barmaid who can be spotted parading up and down the bar in a green dress on many a dark and stormy night.



THE DROVERS INN

Location: Loch Lomond, Stirling, Scotland

2 Rumoured to be Britain's most haunted inn, those who have stayed at this rustic public house have reported numerous ghostly sightings. Many have spotted a young crofting family wandering the grounds nearby searching for the hotel. The family tragically froze to death in the late 18th Century having been turfed out of their home. Visitors have also reported sightings of a young child, said to have drowned in a lake nearby. A search party pulled her from the waters and lay her body in the hotel to allow her family time to grieve, but the little girl continues to look for the doll she lost in the water.

1240
Ye Olde
Salutation
Inn

YE OLDE SALUTATION INN

Location: Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England

3 Standing above a fascinating network of caves dating back to the 9th Century, this inn is home to at least three terrifying ghosts. One of the most famous is flower girl Rosie who according to legend was struck by a carriage outside the pub when she was only four or five. Transported down to the caves to keep her comfortable, she passed away before the local doctor could arrive.

THE TEN BELLS

Location: London, England

4 Serving pints since 1666, this was a regular watering hole for many victims of 'Jack The Ripper' who killed five women in 1888. The ghost of one of the victims, Annie Chapman, is said to still frequent the pub today. Another resident is the former landlord, who owned the pub in Victorian times, and was murdered with an axe. His ghost is said to be stalking the upper floors of the establishment.

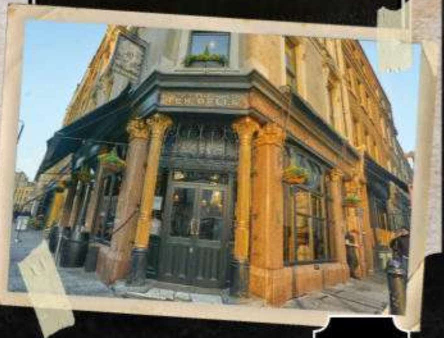


Image source: Getty, Alamy

MERMAID INN

Location: Rye, East Sussex, England

5 Nestled between the former home and walled garden of author, Henry James and the stunning 13th-century Rye Castle lies a ghost hunter's dream. The charismatic Mermaid Inn is home to winding tunnels, secret passageways, ominous wall carvings, crooked low-beam ceilings and some of the quirky rooms you can stay in even have their own supernatural star. Room One (James), belongs to a lady in white who sits in the chair by the fireplace. Room 10 (Fleur de Lys) is said to be haunted by a wacky man who enjoys spooking guests by walking through the bathroom wall into the main room. The most haunted of the 31 rooms is reportedly room 19, (Dr Syn's Bedchamber) haunted by an elderly man in old-fashioned clothes.

THE RED LION INN

Location: Pewsey, Wiltshire, England

6 A "stylish country pub with rooms", the Red Lion was originally built in the late 16th century as a farmhouse and became a coaching inn during the 19th century. Keeping watch over the inn is the phantom of a woman named Florrie, who was murdered in the 17th Century by her husband. Her remains were thrown into a well, which is now a glass-topped table inside the establishment, allowing a macabre peek into her final resting place. Supernatural sightings at The Red Lion Inn also include a headless horseman whose presence is announced by the echo of horse hooves. Guests who stay upstairs have also reported hearing children giggling in the night.

ANCIENT RAM INN

Location: Wotton-under-Edge., Gloucestershire, England

7 This Grade II-listed building and a former pub located in the picturesque village of Wotton-under-Edge was built on the site of an ancient pagan burial ground in 1145. Privately owned from the late 1960s until 2017, today the site hosts spooky sleepovers for paranormal enthusiasts. The most frequently encountered of the many ghosts reportedly haunting this home is the murdered maiden, Elizabeth, who was buried beneath the bar. The most haunted room in the house is thought to be the Bishop's room. Apparitions of monks have been seen on frequent occasions. In the old barn adjoining the building, unexplained tall dark shadows have seen people frozen to the spot with fear.

THE GEORGE HOTEL AND PILGRIMS INN

Location: Glastonbury, Somerset, England

8 Every 'most haunted' feature needs a love story, and this southwestern pub and guesthouse is the one. According to legend, at least two ghosts haunt this building. One of the ghosts is an elegant woman, and the other is a monk from the nearby Glastonbury Abbey. A German medium who visited the pub and inn told the manageress that the ghosts were, in fact, two residents (from a time when the Abbey was central to the town) who fell in love but, because of his vow of celibacy, theirs was a forbidden love. So frustrated were they by their inability to be together, their spirits were bound to the pub where they live happily together in the afterlife.

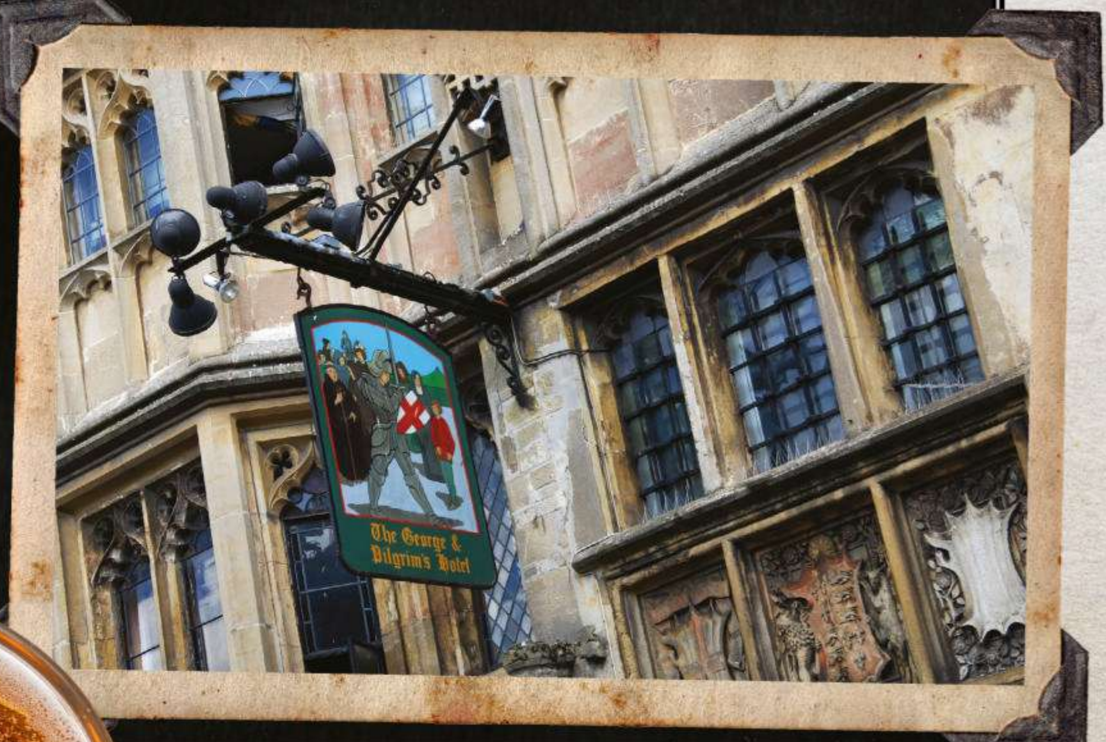
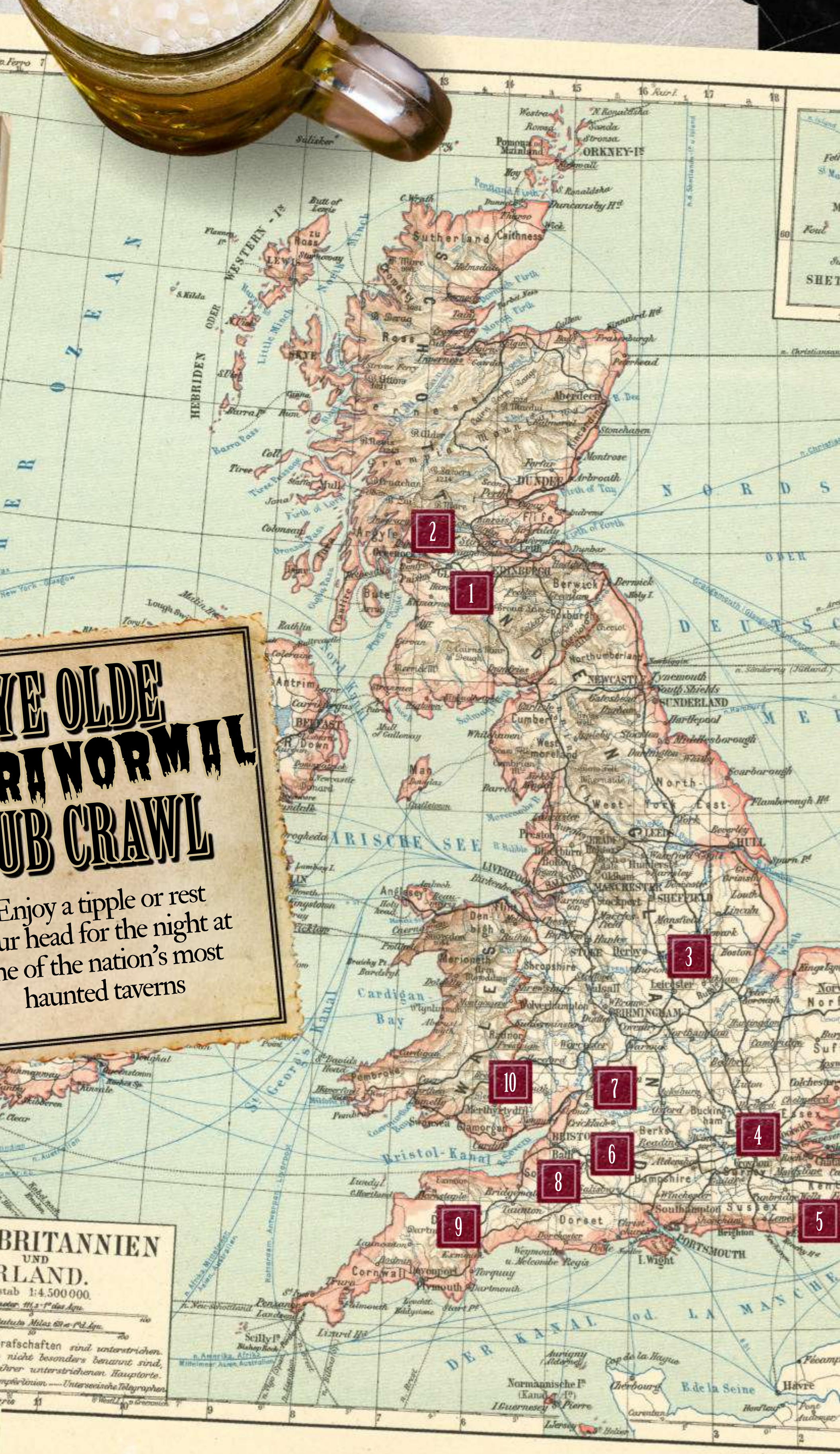


Image source: Getty; Alamy

YE OLDE PARANORMAL PUB CRAWL

Enjoy a tipple or rest your head for the night at one of the nation's most haunted taverns



JAMAICA INN

Location: Launceston, Cornwall, England

9 Ghost sightings occurred at this 18th Century coach house as early on as 1911. Visitors claimed to have spotted a young man donning a US airman's uniform coming through the kitchen door and entering the bar before vanishing. For any sceptics, one spooky occurrence was caught on camera in October 2017. It shows the receiver of the pub's wall phone being picked up and dropped into thin air, scaring the barmaid. A mysterious crying baby has been reported from inside Room 7. Meanwhile, those staying in rooms 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, have all had reports of someone knocking on the bedroom door, but when the occupants answered no one was outside.

SKIRRID INN

Location: Crucorney, Abergavenny, Wales

10 The oldest and possibly most haunted pub in Wales, many of those who have braved a night's stay in Skirrid Inn have reported spotting ghosts stalking the grounds. The inn was first used as a courtroom, in which over 180 were convicted of capital crimes. Their punishment was to hang by the neck until dead from the oak beam over the staircase outside the courtroom. Those condemned to walk the floors of the inn for eternity include the 17th Century 'hanging judge', George Jeffreys, while the hangman has also reportedly been seen on occasion. One felon sentenced to death, John Crowther, a sheep rustler, has been seen several times on the property.

THE SKIRRID INN

BRITAIN'S MOST HAUNTED VILLAGE

Pluckley in Kent holds the exciting honour of being Britain's most haunted village, a title that saw it enter the Guinness Book of Records in 1989!

Location:
Pluckley, Kent, England, UK

Time zone:
UTC

Currency:
Pound sterling

Tips: Pluckley is about an hour from central London by train, perfect for a day trip!

While Pluckley will be familiar to fans of *The Darling Buds of May*, filmed in the village in the 1990s, it has a darker side. The village has 12 to 16 ghosts and has appeared on *Most Haunted* and *Ghost Hunters International*, among others, making it an ideal location for the would-be ghosthunter.

Pluckley dates back to the 11th century and appears in the Domesday Book, although it could be older according to nearby Roman ruins. The village specialised in weaving until the wool trade collapsed. Sadly, the Black Death ravaged Pluckley in the 14th century, making this a site well-versed in death and personal tragedy. The Dering family were lords of the manor between the 15th and early 20th centuries, and they feature in the legends, including our first location!

SCREAMING WOOD

Dering Woods

1 Officially called Dering Wood, many know it by its more terrifying nickname – Screaming Wood. This name comes from the sudden screams that emanate from the depths of the wood. It's especially eerie at dusk, when the trees seem to close in making it hard to find your way.

ST NICHOLAS'S CHURCH

The Street

2 This quaint English church is home to the White Lady and the Red Lady. According to legend, the White Lady haunts the church, having been buried wearing a white dress inside seven coffins and an oak casket. People hear knocking from the family vault beneath the floor in the Dering Chapel, while dancing lights appear in the window.

Some say the White Lady also appeared in the library at the Dering family manor, although the building burned down in 1952. During one such sighting, a terrified man from the US Embassy, who was staying at the manor, shot the White Lady when he saw her ghost on Christmas Eve!

The Red Lady, thought by some to be the ghost of Lady Dering, prowls the churchyard, searching for her stillborn baby's grave with a small white dog by her side.

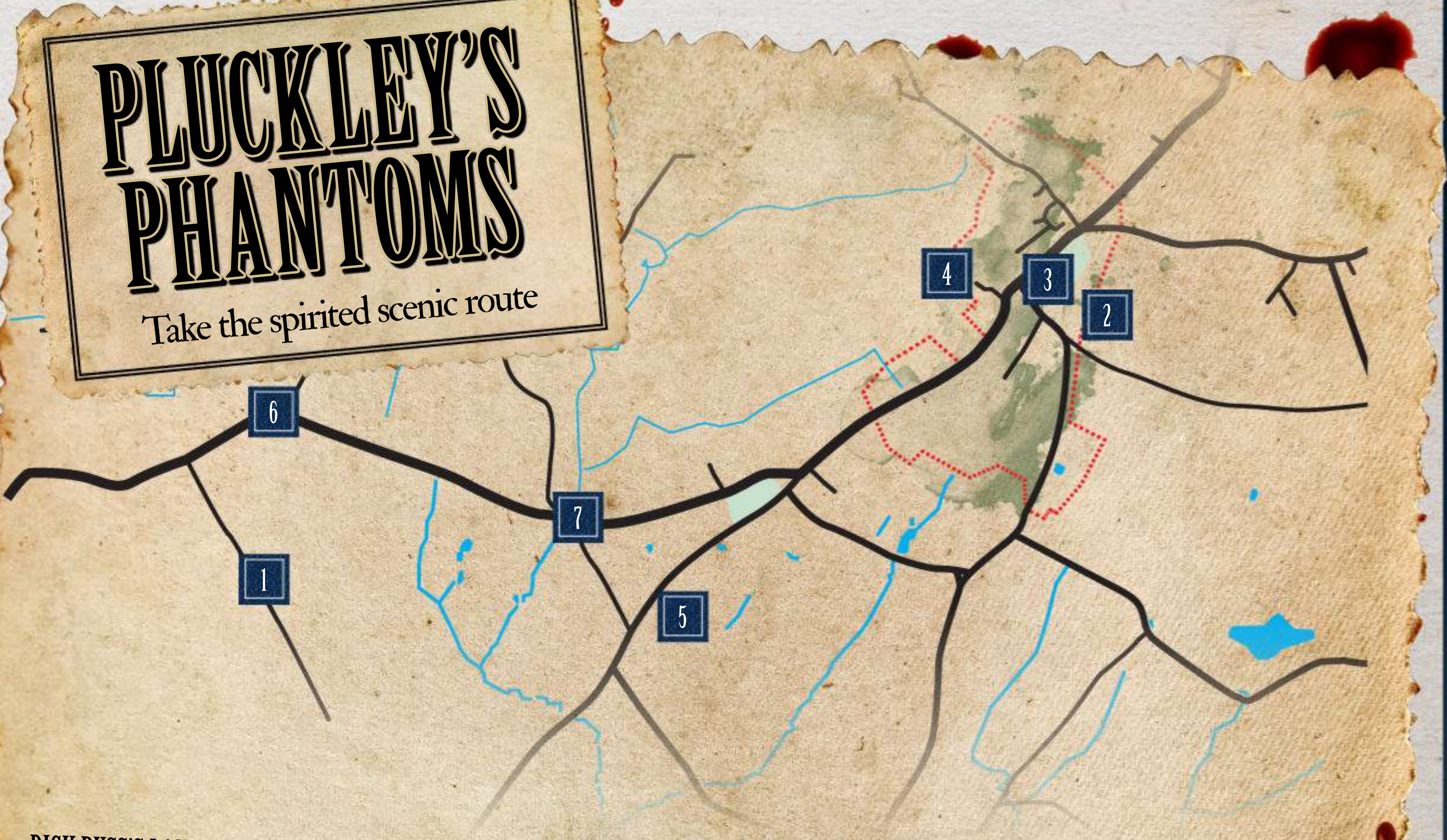
THE BLACK HORSE INN

The Street

3 No haunted village would be complete without a haunted pub, and the 300-year-old Black Horse Inn fits the bill. Customers have seen glasses move on their own, while cutlery is sometimes neatly rearranged near a dresser. Dogs bark at empty spots in the main room and refuse to enter an upstairs room.

PLUCKLEY'S PHANTOMS

Take the spirited scenic route



DICK BUSS'S LANE

Just off Smarden Road

4 A teacher hung himself from a tree here in the 1920s, and it's debated whether schoolchildren or Dick Buss, the local miller, found him. People say they still see his phantom swinging from the branch where he died, usually on a full moon. His shadowy form is said to appear before a thunderstorm.

MALTMAN'S HILL

Smarden Road

5 This street is one of several locations where locals have seen or heard a phantom coach rattling through the village. One witness saw the coach roll by with brightly lit windows and a horse in the harness. In 1997, a driver heard hooves on cobbles but saw no coach – a common feature of the encounters.

FRIGHT CORNER

Smarden Bell Road/Greenhill Lane

6 Fright Corner is the fantastic name of the crossroads near Screaming Wood. A shadowy figure stalks the area, and locals believe he's an 18th-century highwayman killed by the lawmen of the village; a spectral fight sometimes played out for witnesses. Some people have even seen him pinned to a tree stump by a sword!

PINNOCK BRIDGE

Smarden Bell Road

7 The ghost of an old woman haunts this area although, nowadays, she's seen as a pink light hovering above the ground. According to legend, a watercress seller lived in the area and accidentally dropped her pipe onto the woman's clothes one night as she slept. They found her charred remains the next day.

Images © Getty; Alamy

THE WORLD'S CREEPIEST CASTLES

What terrors lurk in the walls of the world's most fearsome fortresses? Castles weren't just opulent homes, they were citadels; strongholds designed to endure invasion, built not only to fight off their enemies but to capture, imprison and torture them. If you are seeking spine-chilling spectres, these palace phantoms won't disappoint...

MALAHIDE CASTLE

Location: Dublin, Ireland **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Euro

The imposing Malahide Castle to the north of Dublin (p56)was seat of the Talbot family for 791 years from 1185, when the land was first granted to Richard Talbot by Henry II, until 1976 when the estate was sold to the Irish State.

Thanks to this long history and its position close to the Irish capital, Malahide has witnessed more than its fair share of drama and turmoil over the centuries. This included the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, during which the Talbots came out on the side of the deposed Catholic king, James II – only to lose all but one of the 14 male members of the family who fought that day.

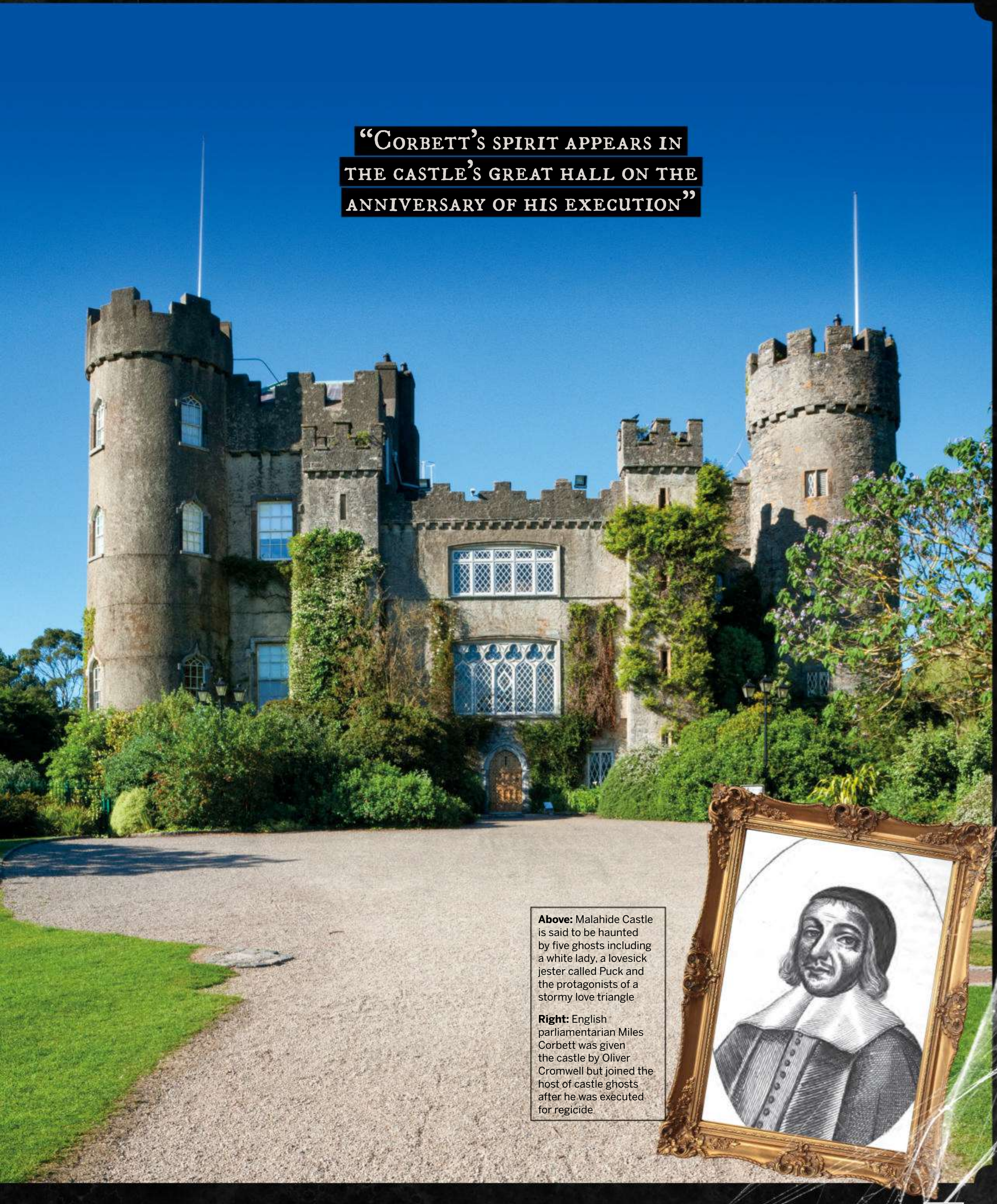
40 years earlier, in 1649, the castle was seized by Oliver Cromwell and given to his supporter, the MP for Yarmouth, Miles Corbett, who signed the death warrant of Charles I and was subsequently hanged, drawn and quartered for regicide two years after the restoration of Charles II. It's said that Corbett's spirit not only appears in the castle's great hall on the anniversary of his execution, but that he also occasionally manifests in full armour that then falls apart around him in four pieces, apparently reflecting the gruesome manner of his death.

Another one of the castle's ghosts allegedly dates from the 16th century and is said to be the spirit of a dwarf jester called Puck who fell in love with the beautiful Lady Eleanor Fitzgerald. He either took his own life after being rejected or was murdered by her family to prevent them from eloping, but nonetheless he is said to be a mischievous ghost who loves to prank visitors and appear in photographs.

But the best-known phantoms at Malahide are said to be the ghosts of Walter Hussey, Lord Galtrim, and his love, Lady Matilda Plunkett. According to legend, Hussey was killed by a love rival on his way to his wedding and now haunts the halls of Malahide, clutching a fearful spear wound in his side and groaning in agony. Lady Matilda also haunts the castle along with her second husband, with whom she had an extremely stormy relationship – to the extent that she has reportedly been seen chasing his ghost through the castle corridors.

The other female ghost said to haunt Malahide is much more sedate. A beautiful young lady in white, her portrait hangs in the great hall and she has allegedly been seen walking around the castle at night.

> "Corbett's spirit appears in the castle's great hall on the anniversary of his execution"



Above: Malahide Castle is said to be haunted by five ghosts including a white lady, a lovesick jester called Puck and the protagonists of a stormy love triangle

Right: English parliamentarian Miles Corbett was given the castle by Oliver Cromwell but joined the host of castle ghosts after he was executed for regicide

Image source: Getty

LEAP CASTLE

Location: Co. Offaly, Ireland Time zone: UTC Currency: Euro

Claimed to be the most haunted site in all of Ireland, Leap Castle hides a dark and treacherous past behinds its walls. Allegedly built on the site of a druid initiation site, which was chosen for being the crossing of two Ley lines, it is claimed that the barrier between the physical and spiritual realms are particularly thin here, resulting in paranormal activity that exaggerated the aura – both good and bad.

Even before it was built, the castle was bathed in blood, condemning the site to negative paranormal activity. Built by the O'Bannon clan in the 13th century, the family was in the midst of a dilemma – two brothers contested each other's claim as chieftain. To solve the issue, both brothers jumped into a rocky gorge, the survivor taking the title.

Merely 200 years later, the Earl of Kildare attempted to seize the castle several times, the last attempt succeeding in destroying part of it. The castle soon landed in the lap of the O'Carroll clan. The O'Carrolls, too, were engaged in a serious sibling rivalry. Following the death of the chieftain in 1532, two sons feuded over the right to lead. One a warrior, the other a priest, both claimed that it was their right. One day, as the priest held mass for some family, his brother stormed in. Outraged that the priest had started the mass before all of the family had arrived, he leapt towards the priest and plunged his sword straight through his heart. The priest collapsed over his altar, soaking it in his blood. To this day, the ghost of the priest has been seen around the chapel.

It's not just the priest whose spirit remains at Leap Castle. The ghosts of two young girls have been spotted at the site. Usually seen playing together, others have reported witnessing one of the girls falling from the battlements, while the other has been seen dragging a deformed leg behind her. These sisters, Emily and Charlotte, were thought to have lived there in the 1600s.

More inexplicable, perhaps, is the hybrid phantom that roams the grounds. Apparently as big as a sheep, but with the face of a human, this demon emits the foul stench of rotting flesh. If that's not bad enough, in place of eyes, the demon has empty, black pools. Nobody can explain its terrifying presence, but it has since been named the Elemental, and some theories claim that the spirit calls back to the days of the druids. Thankfully it's said that the Elemental doesn't appear unless you provoke it.

Even today, the castle's current owner, Sean Ryan, reports curious goings on. Currently undergoing renovations, Sean has reported that ladders have been pushed from walls, as well as other unexplained accidents that have resulted in workers' broken limbs.

Below: Leap Castle in County Offaly has seen nearly eight centuries of turmoil… and ghostly reminders abound

GLAMIS CASTLE

Location: Angus, Scotland **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

Although beautiful, romantic Glamis Castle is now perhaps best known as the childhood home of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and birthplace of Princess Margaret, it is also synonymous with several ghost stories as a result of its connections to Scotland's dark and bloody past and mention in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

In the 11th century, Glamis was a royal hunting lodge where, in 1034, the Scottish king Malcolm II was either murdered or died after escaping a nearby battle. The castle remained in royal hands until 1372, when it was granted to Robert II's son-in-law Sir John Lyon, Thane of Glamis, who replaced the lodge with a castle. The Lyon family remained close to the royal Stewarts until the 16th century, when James V, father of Mary Queen of Scots, had Janet Douglas, wife of the Sixth Lord Glamis, arrested for treason and witchcraft and burnt at the stake in Edinburgh Castle in July 1537. After such a violent end, it's no wonder that many people believe that the mysterious 'Grey Lady' who haunts the chapel and clock tower at Glamis is the wraith of the unfortunate Lady Janet.

Meanwhile, the West Tower of the castle is said to be haunted by the spectre of Earl Beardie, said to be Alexander Lindsay, Fourth Earl of Crawford, a man of such evil character that on at least one occasion he hunted one of his own servants before setting his dogs on the unfortunate man, who is also said to haunt the castle. According to legend, when the wicked earl and his cronies committed sacrilege by playing cards on the Sabbath, it attracted the attention of the Devil, who disguised himself as a fellow gambler and won the Earl's soul, forcing him to play cards for all eternity. Perhaps the most troubling legend associated with the castle is that of the Monster of Glamis, who is said to have been the true heir to the Earldom but was so deformed that his parents had him raised in secret in one of the castle's many hidden rooms. According to legend, an unfortunate maidservant accidentally saw the boy and had her tongue cut out to ensure that she could never tell anyone else – eventually becoming yet another one of the castle's many ghosts herself, with more than one visitor claiming to have seen a spectral woman with a bleeding mouth. It's said that the identity of the 'monster' is passed on to every heir to the earldom when he comes of age, with the Queen Mother's own father once reportedly saying: "If you could even guess the nature of this castle's secret, you would get down on your knees and thank God it was not yours."

GWRYCH CASTLE

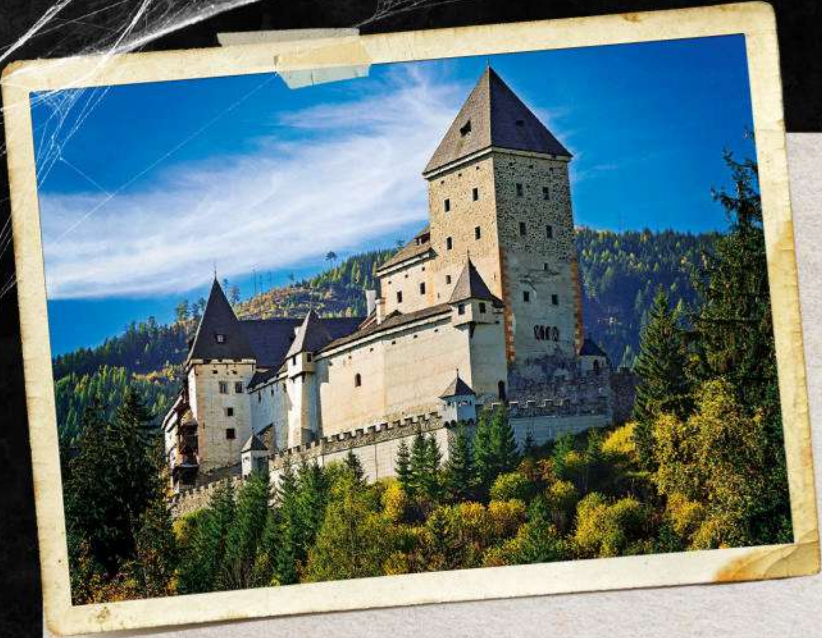
Location: Abergele, Wales **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

Wales is known as "the land of castles" thanks to the fact that it has more castles per square mile than any other country in Europe, 427 of them in fact! Many date back to the middle ages and are riddled with phantoms, including the capital city's fortress Cardiff Castle, Pembrokeshire's creepy Carew Castle, Caerphilly castle and the cursed Craig Y Nos. But the most eerie of all is Gwrych Castle thanks to its extensive size and its forlorn appearance. Although one of Wales' younger fortresses (it only dates back 200 years), it has been used as a site for reenactments and filming locations thanks to its imposing size. The castle has fallen into disrepair, however, with its once regal marble staircase being reclaimed by land, cold, empty rooms with peeling plaster and exposed entrances to once hidden passageways. Money earned from filming is going towards its preservation – but no amount of cash can rid the estate of its ghosts. The site is rumoured to be haunted by Countess Winifred, who died in 1924, the ghost of a former servant girl who supposedly died falling off a horse, a lady in red or white, and numerous others. Many visitors have reported a strange feeling of being watched, bad vibes and hearing footsteps.

TIPS

Book onto one of the castle's regular ghost hunt nights where you will be provided with paranormal investigation equipment and can take part in table tipping and divination

Image source: Getty; Alamy



MOOSHAM CASTLE

Location: Salzburg, Austria **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Euro

Popularly known as the Witches' Castle, Moosham was home to some of the darkest moments in Austrian history. Between 1675 and 1690, its spooky walls were at the heart of the Salzburg Witch Trials, where those accused of witchcraft were tried, tortured and condemned. Over the 15 years of trials, more than 130 people were condemned to death, while countless more suffered horrific torture, brutality and abuse.

Curiously, most of the people accused of witchcraft were men, and the accusers weren't particular about who their accusations fell upon; those who were executed varied from ten years old all the way up to 80. Arguably those who weren't executed faced a worse fate than those who were. Thousands were tortured, and until their dying day, they were marked as a witch.

Most of those accused of witchcraft were beggars, paupers and the homeless. One particularly unfortunate beggar, a 12-year-old boy, became known as Wizard Jackl. The government fiercely hunted him after he disappeared following the execution of his mother in 1675. Despite hearing rumours of the boy's death two years later, the government rounded up his friends on the streets under the accusation that they'd been taught black magic by their long-gone friend. Under torture, the children told tales of Jackl's power and barbarity, claiming that he could make himself invisible, eventually convincing the government that they'd rather not find the boy.

Moosham's mystical credentials don't end there. In the 19th century, hundreds of deer and cattle were found dead all around the castle. Naturally many residents leapt to the conclusion that werewolves were responsible, and several castle residents were tried and executed under the accusation that they were leading secret double lives as werewolves.

To this day, the castle is host to several paranormal presences. Those who have visited the castle claim to have felt someone breathing on them, while others say they've been touched by some invisible being. More frequently, bangs, footsteps and apparitions have been reported. Perhaps no surprise given such history!

CACHTICE CASTLE

Location: Salzburg, Austria **Time zone:** UTC+2 **Currency:** Euro

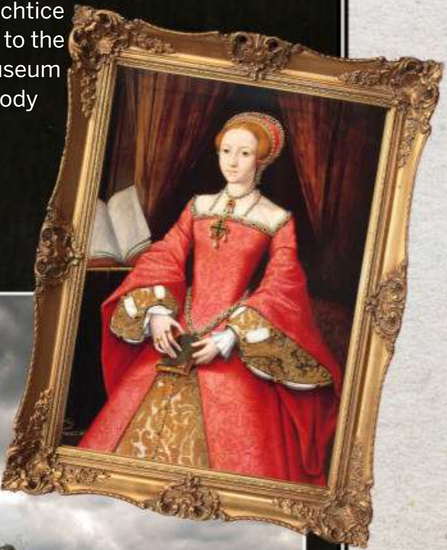
The notorious Hungarian countess, Elizabeth Bathory, was a wealthy and powerful 16th century noblewoman. But being a powerful, wealthy woman without a husband was a terrifying notion to 16th century Europe and rumours quickly circulated that she was a serial killer, torturing and killing women. If the conjecture is correct, Bathory could be responsible for the deaths of more than 600 young women – one of the most prolific female serial killers of all time.

Whether it was a witch hunt spurred on by her enemies or Bathory really was a bloodthirsty psychopath, the Countess was tried and sentenced to spend the rest of her days trapped inside the home where her victims had allegedly met their doom – the Castle of Csejte – where she died at age 43. Unsurprisingly, her servant accomplices didn't get quite such a lenient conviction, with three sentenced to death and only one getting off as lightly as their mistress. Bathory has become a figure of folklore, and more and more myths have spread about the Countess, including her penchant for selecting virgins, bathing in her victims blood in an attempt to stay young forever and even drinking their vital fluids, earning her the epithets The Blood Countess and Countess Dracula.

The castle later fell into disrepair, but appeared as Count Orlok's home in the iconic 1922 silent horror film, *Nosferatu*, further cementing its link to vampires. The castle is said to be haunted by the tormented souls of the girls that the Countess murdered as well as Bathory herself, and today you can explore the disintegrated remains of the once extensive fortress. In the nearby town of Čachtice there is a small museum devoted to the Blood Countess at the nearby museum as well as the church where her body was initially interred.

Below: Čachtice castle can be seen in *Nosferatu*

Right: 'Bloodthirsty' noble Elizabeth Bathory



ELTZ CASTLE

Location: Wierschem, Germany **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Euro

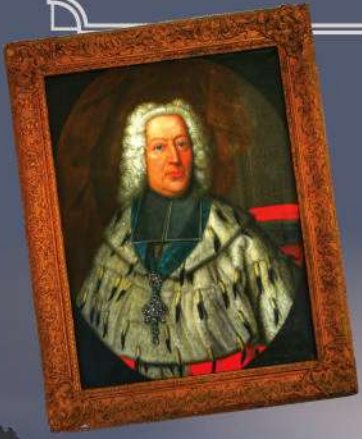
This castle was once home to a young lady named Agnes Eltz. A daughter among many sons, Agnes grew up around the 16th century, pretending to be a warrior with her brothers rather than a princess. But like many girls of her age and status, Agnes was destined for an arranged marriage from a young age. Her parents' spouse of choice was the knight of Braunsberg. The pair met several times, but the young girl dismissed him as boring and chose to ignore him. One day, infuriated by her lack of interest, the knight grabbed Agnes and forced himself upon her. Outraged, Agnes pushed him away and slapped him round the face – a great embarrassment for her family. The knight's patience had worn thin, and her slap pushed him over the edge. He stormed out of Eltz Castle, vowing revenge for what he considered to be disrespectful behaviour.

For months, the Eltz family lived in fear of an attack – but it didn't come. Lulled into a sense of security, the family resumed their usual lives. But the knight hadn't forgotten. For months he stewed in his resentment, plotting how to take revenge for the slight by Agnes. One day, when the Eltz men went out hunting, Braunsberg and his soldiers stormed the castle, killing the guardsmen and attacking anyone in sight. Agnes, more the brave soldier than a fragile maiden, leapt into action, donning her brother's suit of armour and storming out to attack the knight. Braunsberg fought back, dealing her a fatal blow to the chest. It was only after the battle that the knight realised that the ferocious warrior he'd killed was his own betrothed. He fled.

Agnes' ghost now defends her castle; and in turn, a phantom horseman – the apparition of the knight of Braunsberg – has been seen riding near the gates seeking forgiveness.

TIPS

If you visit the castle at Eltz, you'll pass through the gates at its entrance. A guard, only visible to some, has paced Eltz since her brutal death many centuries ago



Far left: Phillipp Karl von Eltz-Kempenich, one of the early proprietors of this spooky pile

Left: The majestic Eltz Burg towers above the river Moselle like a fairytale… and a dark one at that

Image source: Getty; Alamy

HOUSKA CASTLE

Location: Blatce, Czechia **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Czech koruna

About 50km away from Prague stands a castle that seemingly serves absolutely no purpose. Houska Castle was built in the 14th century by the Bohemian ruler Ottokar II. The castle changed hands several times, enjoying a Renaissance redesign in the late-16th century, before falling into disrepair in the 18th century. By the 20th century, the curious legend of Houska Castle had attracted the attention of one particular group of people: the Nazis.

Unlike other fortresses of the period, it wasn't meant to house the king. The castle wasn't near any trading route and there was no access to water. Defences were built inside the castle rather than outside – instead of keeping people out, it seemed like the castle was meant to trap something else in.

According to lore, this apparently pointless construction was, in fact, built over the gates of hell. A bottomless hole had existed at Houska for centuries, a gateway for demons and evil beings to enter Earth and terrorise people. The area has long been avoided by locals, and even to this day the castle is given a wide berth, with only the inquisitive daring to set enter.

Above this fateful hole stands the chapel, dedicated to none other than the leader of God's army, Archangel Michael. Frescoes decorate the walls – but their gory tales give an insight into what lurks below, with left-handed demons clawing their way out of the scenes.

However, before the chapel's construction, the hole was involved in some sinister experiments. Attempts were made to fill the hole with rocks, but no matter how many rocks were thrown in, it never seemed to fill. It's alleged that one duke summoned prisoners who had been condemned to death and offered them a pardon if they agreed to be lowered into the hole. Many agreed, expecting to escape with their lives. They were mistaken. There was silence as one man was lowered down. Moments later, his uncontrollable screams echoed up from the depths. As he was hauled back out, they discovered his hair had turned white and he'd aged several decades. They never found out what was in there – it drove the prisoner to madness, and he died days later.

Houska Castle's secrets don't end there. Many visitors claim to have experienced supernatural encounters, from the ghost of a woman that stalks the corridors, to curious animal-like presences. It's these stories and supernatural sightings that struck a chord with the Nazis. From 1939 to 1945, Houska Castle was home to occult experiments, but records were destroyed and it's not known what happened here. However, several skeletons of Nazi officers were discovered during renovations.

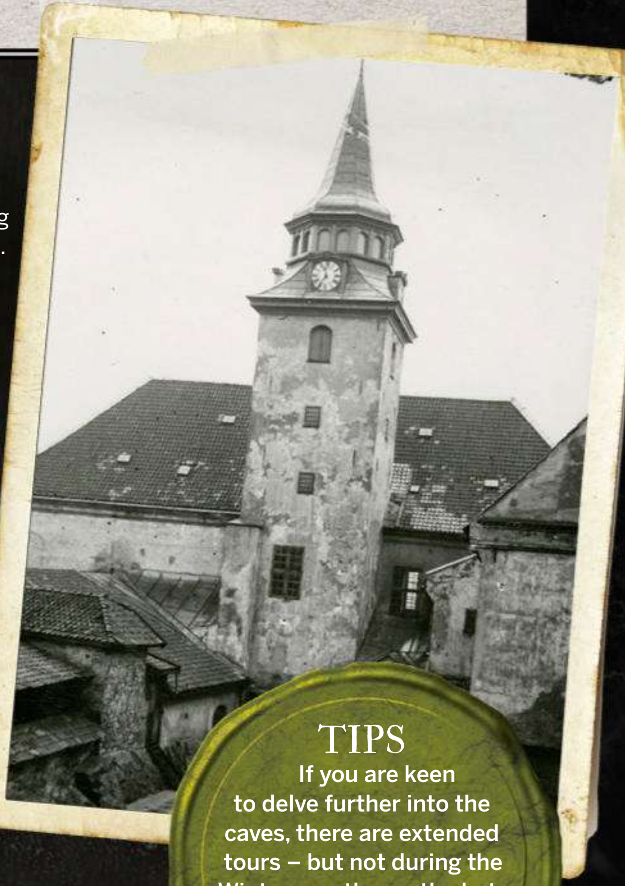
x2 Images | Image source: Wikipedia commons / Lukáš Kalista

AKERSHUS FESTNING

Location: Oslo, Norway Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Norwegian kroner

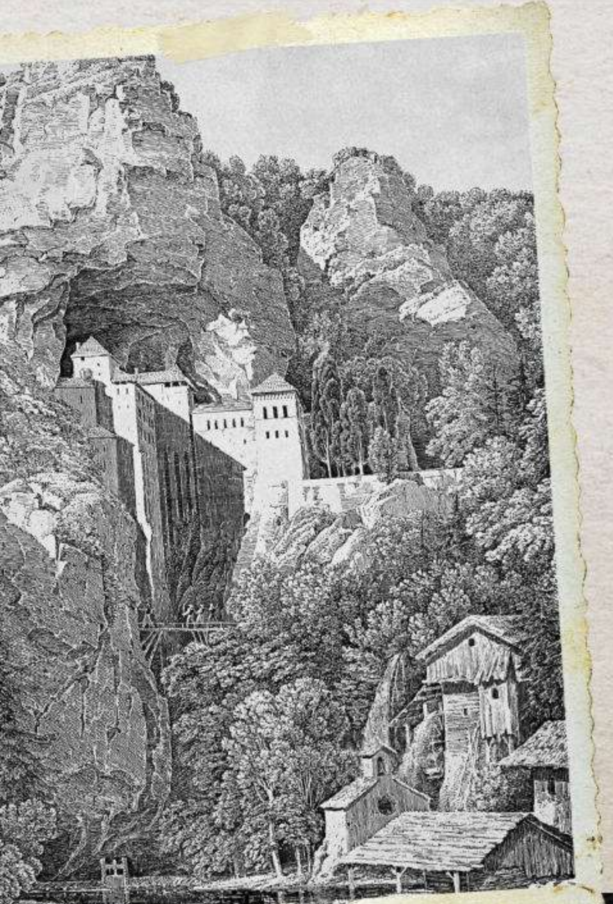
Built under King Haakon V in 1299 as a castle, Akershus Festning was home to generations of Norwegian rulers and is an important landmark of the Norwegian capital. The fortress has withstood a number of sieges and has even functioned as a notorious prison where Norway's answer to Robin Hood, Ole Høiland, committed suicide in 1848. When a prison, part of the castle was dubbed the Slaveriet ('Slavery'), where prisoners were subjected to extreme hard labour, causing many a death. This is perhaps the reason why the fortress has earned the title of Norway's most haunted building. Staff have claimed to hear whisperings and feel strange forces pushing them when walking along its dark corridors. Others have reported disembodied voices, battle screams, sounds of rattling chains, footsteps, sensations of someone breathing down their neck and strange smells. Legend has it that the former gatekeeper of the castle, Garshol, buried a guard dog alive at the Maiden Tower. This poor pup is now known as the Malcanisen ('vicious dog'), returned from death in the form of a vengeful spirit, and if bitten by him you'll die within three months. Other ghosts include the Mantelgeisten – a faceless, cloaked woman seen at the Margaretasalen – and the horse of a drunken Swedish man, who was gunned down when he attempted to storm the castle. But it's the Virgin Tower, the castle's highest tower, that's said to be the most rife with paranormal activity.

Left: This gate is said to be prowled by a vengeful dog spirit



TIPS

If you are keen to delve further into the caves, there are extended tours – but not during the Winter months, as the bats are not to be disturbed in their slumber!



PREDJAMA CASTLE

Location: Inner Carniola, Slovenia Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Euro

This medieval stronghold is built inside a bat-filled cave which has been inhabited by humans since Paleolithic times; and it's also said to be riddled with ghosts. The original 13th century castle was damaged from sieges and rebuilt in the 1500s only to be nearly destroyed by a massive earthquake in 1511. The current structure is a Renaissance castle, built in 1570. As the castle was built as an impregnable safe haven, designed to protect its residents from unwanted attacks, it has some rather interesting boobie traps, such as holes in the ceiling of the entrance tower where boiling oil would be poured onto enemies, and a dungeon where bones have been discovered, a small court room and a torture chamber. According to psychics, the original owner of the castle, Erasmus of Lueg, a Robin-Hood-type knight in shining armour who was eventually murdered in his own home, still haunts Predjama seeking revenge towards the servant who betrayed him. Aside from Erasmus, many have reported footsteps and voices, perhaps from the many souls who met their untimely demise at the castle, whether through violent ends or simply the natural disaster of 1511.

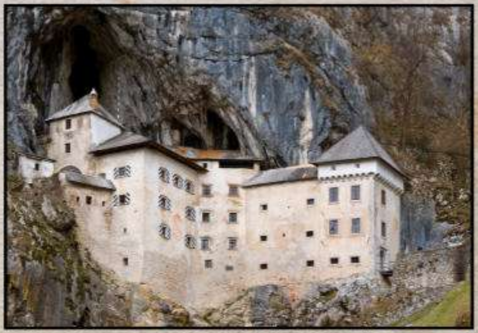


Image source: Getty; Alamy

DRAGSHOLM CASTLE

Location: Zealand, Denmark Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Danish kroner

Built in about 1215 by the Bishop of Roskilde, Dragsholm Castle's history is as rich and interesting as it is morbid. During the Middle Ages, the castle was overhauled and thoroughly fortified, making it the strongest castle at the time. As a testament to its strength, it stood resolute against the fiercely destructive armies of Christoffer, Count of Oldenburg, during the Count's feud of 1534 to 1536.

After the Reformation that followed, Dragsholm Castle fell into the hands of the state, where it was transformed into a prison for noble and high-ranking prisoners. Here, each prisoner received a cell built especially for them, while cells in the north east tower of the castle were equipped with toilets and windows.

Perhaps the most infamous prisoner of Dragsholm Castle was James Hepburn, 4th earl of Boswell, the third husband of Mary, Queen of Scots. Caught in Norway in 1573, the earl found himself transported to Dragsholm on the order of King Frederik II of Denmark. Here, he was tied to a pillar and was provided with only enough food and water to keep him alive. It's alleged that he went insane, dying almost five years after capture. Witnesses claim to have seen the ghost of the disgraced Earl of Boswell riding into the courtyard on his horse and carriage, the sound of the horse's hooves audible across the castle.

As well as James Hepburn, there are apparently more than 99 other ghosts that frequent the castle's hallways. The Mad Squire, a noble-born Dane who died at the castle, has been heard moaning from the dungeons of the castle, while there are two ladies who haunt the corridors, one a disgraced daughter of a noble, the other a grateful worker. The Grey Lady, who had worked in the castle for years, went to work one day complaining of toothache. Her master had given her some relief for the pain, but tragically the woman died. Yet thankful for the help her master had offered her, she stuck around.

The White Lady, however, met her maker after disgracing her father. Calina Bovles, the daughter of a noble, had fallen in love with a mere commoner and had become pregnant with his child. As evidence of her liaison grew, her father realised the atrocity that she had committed and locked her in a room until she died. Incidentally, during renovations, the skeleton of a woman wearing a white dress was uncovered in the 20th century.

TIPS

As well as a museum, Dragsholm Castle is also a hotel, so you can rent a room for a night

CHÂTEAU DE BRISSAC

Location: Brissac-Loire-Aubance, France Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Euro

The gloriously ornate Château de Brissac has dominated the Loire Valley for centuries. Built initially as a castle in the 11th century, it was rebuilt in the 1400s, and then again in 1611. However, behind this impressive Baroque façade, the hidden secrets of the château's tragic past are kept.

A double murder that took place in the 15th century has haunted residents, with the vision of the Green Lady terrifying visitors. After the château was rebuilt in the 1400s, Jacques de Brezé, the son of the man that commissioned the redesign, inherited the building. Jacques married a woman named Charlotte, the favoured illegitimate daughter of Charles VII of France. Yet their marriage had not been a happy one. Despite having five children, Charlotte's eye wandered, landing upon her husband's huntsman, Pierre de Lavergne, and a frenzied affair began.

According to legend, Jacques walked in on his wife and her lover intertwined. It was the final straw. Here, records become murky. Some claim that the lovers were murdered on the spot, with over one hundred blows from Jacques's sword delivering them to their messy deaths. However, others claim that Jacques waited, murdering the pair separately. In this story, Charlotte was allegedly killed in the château's chapel, brutally strangled by the cuckold. Hearing of his half-sister's murder, King Louis X flew into a rage. Jacques was arrested and sentenced to death. Yet before Jacques could meet his end, Charles VIII, Louis XI's successor, overturned the accusation and Jacques survived. To this day, the ghost of Charlotte has been spotted roaming the tower in the chapel. Known as the Green Lady, it's claimed that half of her face has already rotted away, a blackened corpse with empty eye sockets and no nose. Visitors to the suites that are available to overnight guests have remarked that they've heard dying screams and moans of the murdered couple along the corridors in the early hours of the morning.

TIPS

As well as a museum, Dragsholm Castle is also a hotel, so you can rent a room for a night

CHATEAU DE TIFFAUGES

Location: Tiffauges, France **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Euro

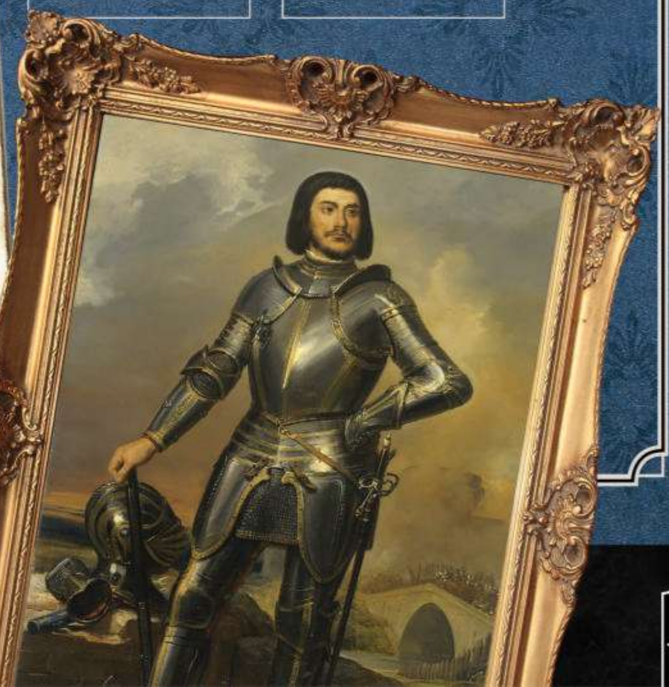
Known as the Château de Barbe-bleue (Bluebeard's Castle) Chateau de Tiffauges was where the infamous serial killer Gilles de Rais committed his atrocious crimes. A lord and knight, born Gilles de Montmorency-Laval, Rais was a companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc during the Hundred Year's War (1337–1453) and was awarded the title Marshal of France. After he retired from the military he quickly spent all of his wealth on frivolity and was accused of dabbling in the occult – he attempted to summon a demon in the lower hall of the chateau, but it appears he wasn't particularly good at sorcery. Rumours began circulating that Rais was responsible for the disappearance of a large number of children around the Tiffauges area during the 1430s.

Finally, in 1440, a violent dispute with a clergyman verified the rumours and his true nature as a pedophile and serial killer, who had kidnapped and raped a number of young children (mostly boys) only to then have them killed or kill them himself. An ecclesiastical investigation led to the exposure of his crimes, of which Rais confessed, had begun in 1432, following the death of his grandfather. His cousins Gilles de Sillé and Roger de Briqueville assisted Rais in at least one kidnapping, with Gilles de Sillé also being enlisted to murder children after they were assaulted. But it was Rais' bodyguard, Poitou, who was most often his accomplice, later testifying against him in court and giving a graphic description of his master's atrocities, inciting terror upon his juvenile victims and torture.

The parents of the missing children, witnesses who had seen Rais' servants dumping the children's bodies and his own cohort also testified at the trial, and following threat of torture, Rais himself came clean and was sentenced to death. In his own confession, Rais reportedly admitted that "when the said children were dead, he kissed them and those who had the most handsome limbs and heads he held up to admire them, and had their bodies cruelly cut open and took delight at the sight of their inner organs; and very often when the children were dying he sat on their stomachs and took pleasure in seeing them die and laughed".

He was found guilty of sodomy, necrophilia, pedophilia and slaughtering over 100 children and sentenced to death in 1440 by hanging and burning. Like most medieval criminals, we can't say for sure whether or not he was guilty or just set up by the church in order for them to gain his wealth and usurp his power, however, most historians believe he was indeed guilty due to his own confession. Today the Chateau de Tiffauges is believed to be haunted by his vengeful spirit.

Left: 'Blue Beard's Castle' in present day Vendée now lies in ruins, but its legend remains



Below: The crimes that Gilles de Rais was tried for are horrific even by medieval standards

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Wikipedia commons/Public Domain

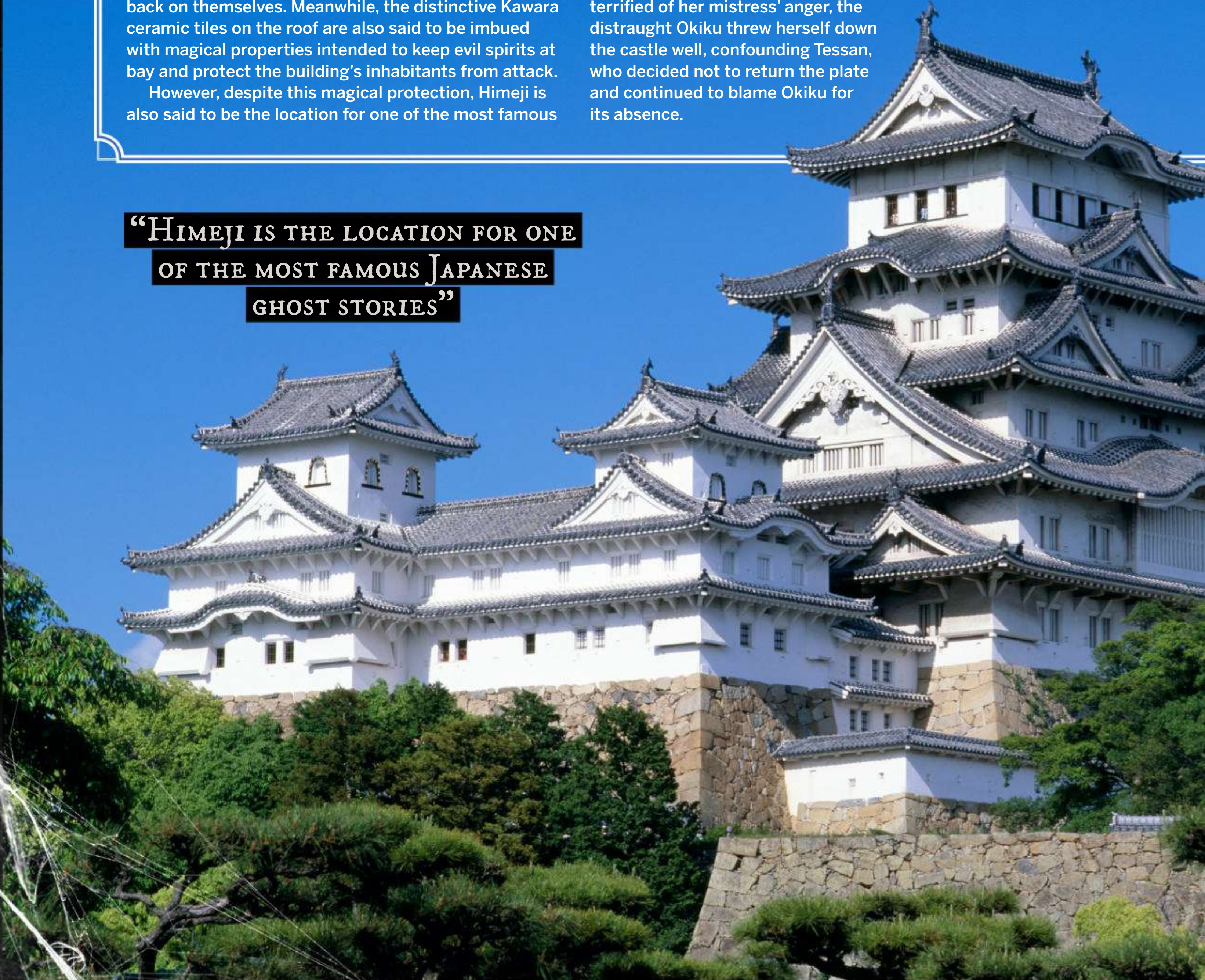
HIMEJI CASTLE

Location: Hyōgo, Japan Time zone: UTC+9 Currency: Yen

Himeji Castle, first founded in 1333, is so beautiful that it is commonly also known as 'White Heron Castle' because its elegant distinctive white facade is said to resemble a heron soaring through the sky. However, despite its tranquil appearance, Himeji was designed for war. The castle boasts a unique defensive system that involves multitudes of loopholes allowing defenders to rain arrows down on their attackers, as well as a perplexing maze of paths around its keep and walkways that go back on themselves. Meanwhile, the distinctive Kawara ceramic tiles on the roof are also said to be imbued with magical properties intended to keep evil spirits at bay and protect the building's inhabitants from attack.

However, despite this magical protection, Himeji is also said to be the location for one of the most famous Japanese ghost stories: that of Okiku and the well. There are several versions of the legend, but one of the most common is that the beautiful maidservant Okiku caught the eye of her master, Tessan Aoyama, who tried to make her his mistress behind his wife's back. When Okiku refused, he hid one of his wife's precious gold plates, which Okiku had the honoured job of looking after, and told the unfortunate girl that if she did not agree to his request, he would tell her mistress that she had stolen it. Unable to find the hidden plate and terrified of her mistress' anger, the distraught Okiku threw herself down the castle well, confounding Tessan, who decided not to return the plate and continued to blame Okiku for its absence.

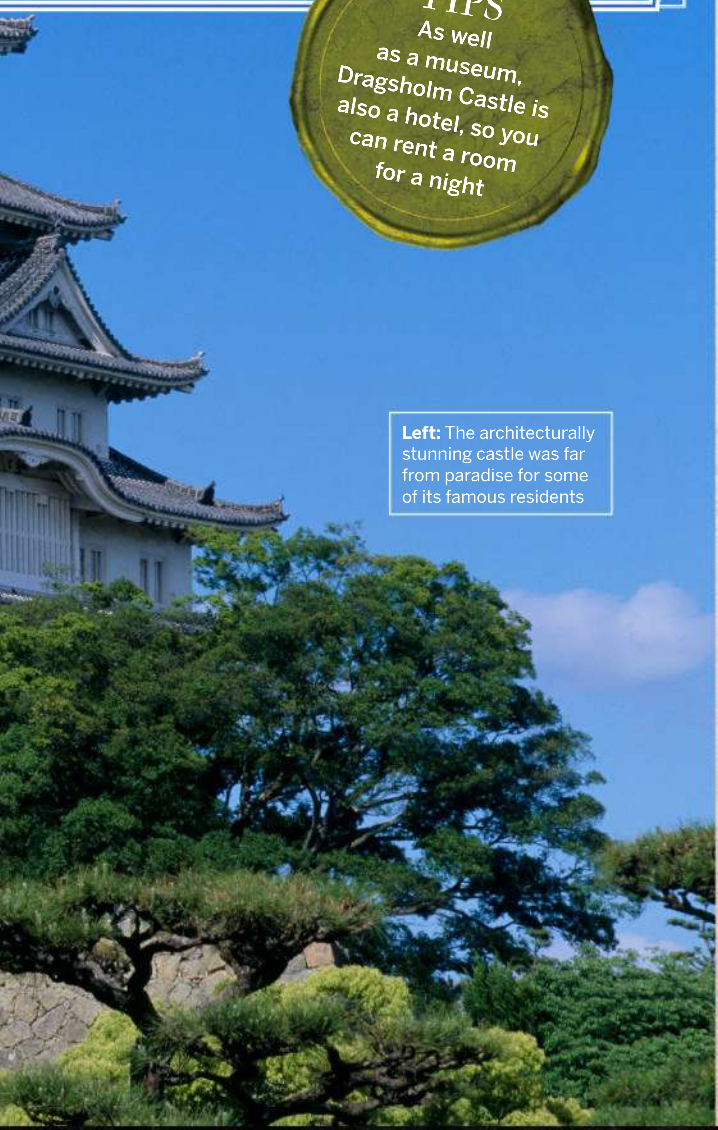
> "Himeji is the location for one of the most famous Japanese ghost stories"



However, shortly after her suicide, Okiku began to haunt the castle and would be seen, dressed in white with her hair hanging loose and dismembered hands and feet, dragging herself out of the well, then making her way on all fours to the cupboard where the nine remaining gold plates were kept. When she reached them, she would desperately count them and then scream in anguish when she reached the spot where the tenth missing plate should have been. Unsurprisingly, Tessan was driven mad with guilt but still refused to return the stolen plate, with the consequence that Okiku is said to still haunt the castle to this day.

TIPS

As well as a museum, Dragsholm Castle is also a hotel, so you can rent a room for a night



Left: The architecturally stunning castle was far from paradise for some of its famous residents

THE FORBIDDEN CITY

Location: Beijing, China Time zone: UTC+8 Currency: Yuan

This extensive former residence of China's imperial family hides 600 years of secrets. Being closed to outsiders during the Ming and Qing dynasties only added to the mystery of this palace city. In 1421, Emperor Yongle, was said to have ordered the massacre of nearly 3,000 people who he believed were conspiring to kill him. His favourite concubines were spared, but all were ordered to be executed upon his death. Yongle's son, Emperor Hongxi attempted to move the court away from the Forbidden City, but died without achieving this aim, sparking rumours that the palace was cursed. It's no surprise that visitors have reported gruesome sights of blood, piles of phantom dead bodies, a ghostly lady pursued by a samurai and the sounds of screaming, clashing swords and crying. Today, the once forbidden palace is a museum full of artefacts from both the Ming and Qing dynasties.

PALACIO DE LINARES

Location: Madrid, Spain Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Euro

This 19th century palace is known for its sweeping marble staircase, French-inspired architecture and ghostly apparitions. The first Marquises of Linares built the palace as his residence, and it is said he and his wife still haunt their former home. According to legend, the couple were half-sibling, unbeknownst to them before their marriage. Upon discovering this, they vowed to live in chastity but their passion for one another was too strong and they bore a daughter. To avoid scandal, they had her murdered and bricked up behind the palace walls, with the couple dying out of grief and suicide merely months later. This, of course, is merely conjecture, and there is no evidence the couple were related nor that they had any children. Nevertheless, the myth persists and the palace is said to be haunted by not only the couple but their child, who is heard singing nursery rhymes and calling for her parents.

Image source: Getty

WELCOME TO DRACULA COUNTRY

Transylvania, the homeland of Count Dracula, is a historic region in the heart of Romania– a country riddled with not only vampires but ghosts, witches and more

BRAN CASTLE

Bran

Bran Castle is perched upon a cliff at the very edge of where Transylvania borders with Wallachia. Vlad "the Impaler" Tepes (nicknamed Dracula, meaning son of the devil), 15th century Voivode of Wallachia, never actually lived in Bran Castle, but that hasn't stopped it from being dubbed Dracula's Castle. The fortress dates back to the 13th century, with the stone castle being erected during the 14th century. But it's the surrounding landscape that's really terrifying. Romanian myths tell of werewolves, the Strigoi, the Iele, the Sântoaderi, the Solomonari and more all lurking across Transylvania – and the castle's permanent exhibit "A history of dreads in Transylvania" will introduce you to these frightening folktales.

Location:
Romania

Time zone:
UTC+02:00

Currency:
Romanian leu

Tips: Fly in to Budapest and book a day trip to explore Transylvania and Dracula's haunts all in one go

CORVIN CASTLE

Hunedoara

Some say that the Voivode of Transylvania John Hunyadi's enormous castle was where Vlad was once imprisoned for several years. Legend has it that Dracula kept himself alive by eating rats and began to entirely lose his mind, causing his blood-thirst to intensify. Along with Vlad, many others were held captive in this massive fortress, including three Turkish men enslaved to build a well. Promised to be set free once they found water, they were betrayed and left to die in the castle's dungeons, inscribing "you now have water, but you don't have a heart" on the wall. The Capistrano Tower is haunted by a monk who was bricked up alive after spying on a nobleman and many have claimed to experience numerous paranormal activities throughout Corvin, including footsteps, screams, orbs, apparitions, shadows and feelings of dread.

CAPITAL HAUNTS

Bucharest City Centre

The Romanian capital is swarming with paranormal activity. The Cişmigiu Hotel is haunted by a murdered girl, who was raped and thrown into the elevator shaft in the 1990s when the building was used as student accommodation. The House Of The Devil on General Praporgescu Street is home to a demonic entity filled with hate and anger, and the numbers 666 can be seen on one of its walls during the full moon. The house was the site of two tragedies: the murder of two women in the inter-war period, and the suicide of another. The Orphanage on French Street is also haunted – by the neglected former child residents *shudder*.

CHIAJNA MONASTERY

Săbăreni Road, Bucharest

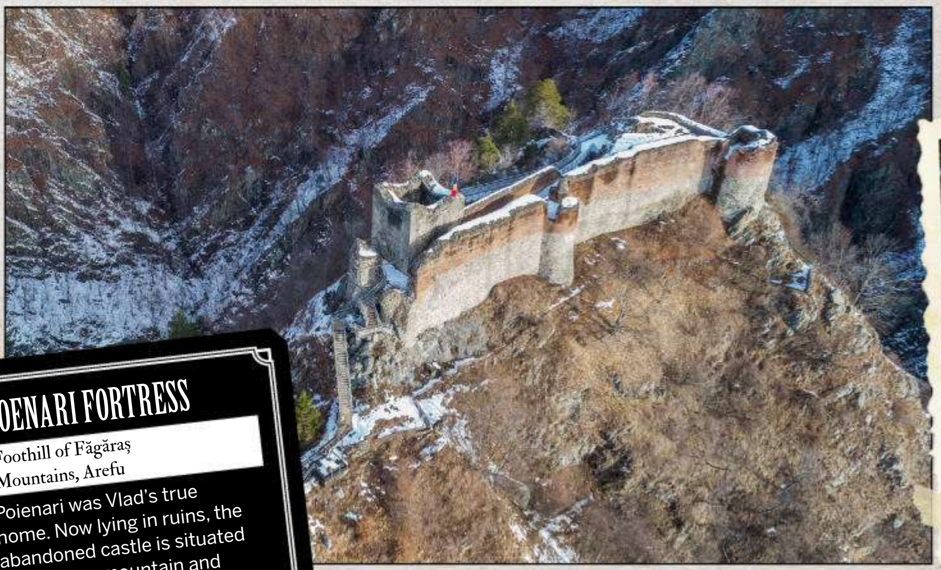
This cursed church was supposedly mistaken for a fortress by the Turks before it had even been consecrated. They burned its contents and threw its bell into the Dâmbovița River, which can still be heard ringing at night when the moon is full. Originally, the church would have been an important place of worship but it was abandoned during the Black Plague – sufferers of which are said to have sought refuge and died at the monastery. Within its crumbling plaster is an angelic figure, reportedly the Lady Chiajna's daughter, who was murdered by her command after the child refused to marry her chosen suiter. There have also been more recent tragedies; in 1967 the body of a teenager was found murdered and in 2006 the church was the backdrop to a horrific triple homicide.

THE WITCHES POND

Boldu-Creteasca Forest, Bucharest

Călugăreasca Forest (located in Mehedinți county) is said to be cursed, its mulberry trees spirits enriched by the blood of murdered monks whose souls are forever stuck in the thickets. On the outskirts of Bucharest there lies a curious water hole deep inside Boldu-Creteasca Forest – the very place where Dracula's namesake, Vlad the Impaler, was decapitated. Known as Witches Pond, this tiny, mysterious pool never changes size, shape nor depth and its surrounding area appears to have a climate all of its own. It is said to be kept alive by rituals performed in June at the Saznienele summer solstice celebrations by witches. Apparently animals refuse to drink from its cursed water and women who wished for abortions would bathe in the cursed waters to rid themselves of their pregnancy.

> "This tiny, mysterious pool is said to be kept alive byrituals performed in June at the Saznienele summer solstice celebrations by witches"



POENARI FORTRESS

Foothill of Făgăraş Mountains, Arefu

Poienari was Vlad's true home. Now lying in ruins, the abandoned castle is situated high atop a mountain and accessed by climbing 1,480 concrete stairs. The notorious ruler gained his nickname as Vlad the Impaler from his brutal tendency to impale enemies on spikes, imitations of which can be seen as you climb the steps to his old haunt. The castle itself is said to be haunted and during the Communist era, many tourists would stay overnight within its ruins in an attempt to witness something paranormal. Vincent Lee Hillyer, husband of Iranian royal Fatemeh Pahlavi, famously reported significant drops in temperature, the smell of rotten flowers, bizarre nightmares, inexplicable keratosis, an overpowering feeling of being watched and having been bitten by seemingly nothing.

IULIA HAȘDEU CASTLE

Câmpina

This "castle" was built in the 1890s by Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu following the death of his daughter, Iulia, at age 19. Hașdeu was thrown into grief and after discovering the popular Spiritualism movement, he reached out to his beloved child through seances, later claiming that the building was done to her specifications. He devoted Hașdeu castle to her and the pair still haunt the home with Iulia's nightly piano performances followed by her father's applause reportedly heard by visitors.

THE DEVIL'S PRECIPICE

Poiana Trestiei, Cosminele

Lurking in the landscape about 100km south of Brasov, lies cursed treasure guarded by ghosts. Legend has it that outlaws buried the stolen fortune and cast a protection spell so that nobody else would ever find it. It appears they never even came back for it themselves, though, and so the area is forever damned. Those attempting to find the buried treasure have reported being met with terrifying entities with the bodies of men but the heads of bulls and demonic eyes. Some have found themselves far away from the spot, with no recollection of how they got there and their clothing in shreds. Others have supposedly been driven mad or met with nightmares until the end of their days.

Images: © Getty; Alamy

PUBLIC SPECTRES

Ghosts don't discriminate when it comes to haunts, and with so many people coming and going inside these public spaces it's no surprise that they are teaming with poltergeists…

Written by Alice Pattillo

PARLIAMENT HOUSE SYDNEY N.S.W.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Location: Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
Time zone: UTC+11 **Currency:** Australian dollar

The oldest part of Old Parliament House was formerly a hospital, complete with a morgue that is reportedly still underground, bricked up beneath the theatrette. Unsurprisingly, staff have seen a shadowy figure prowling the corridors and an old woman in a rocking chair, as well as experienced ghostly phenomena such as being tapped on the shoulder and hearing the disembodied cries of a baby.

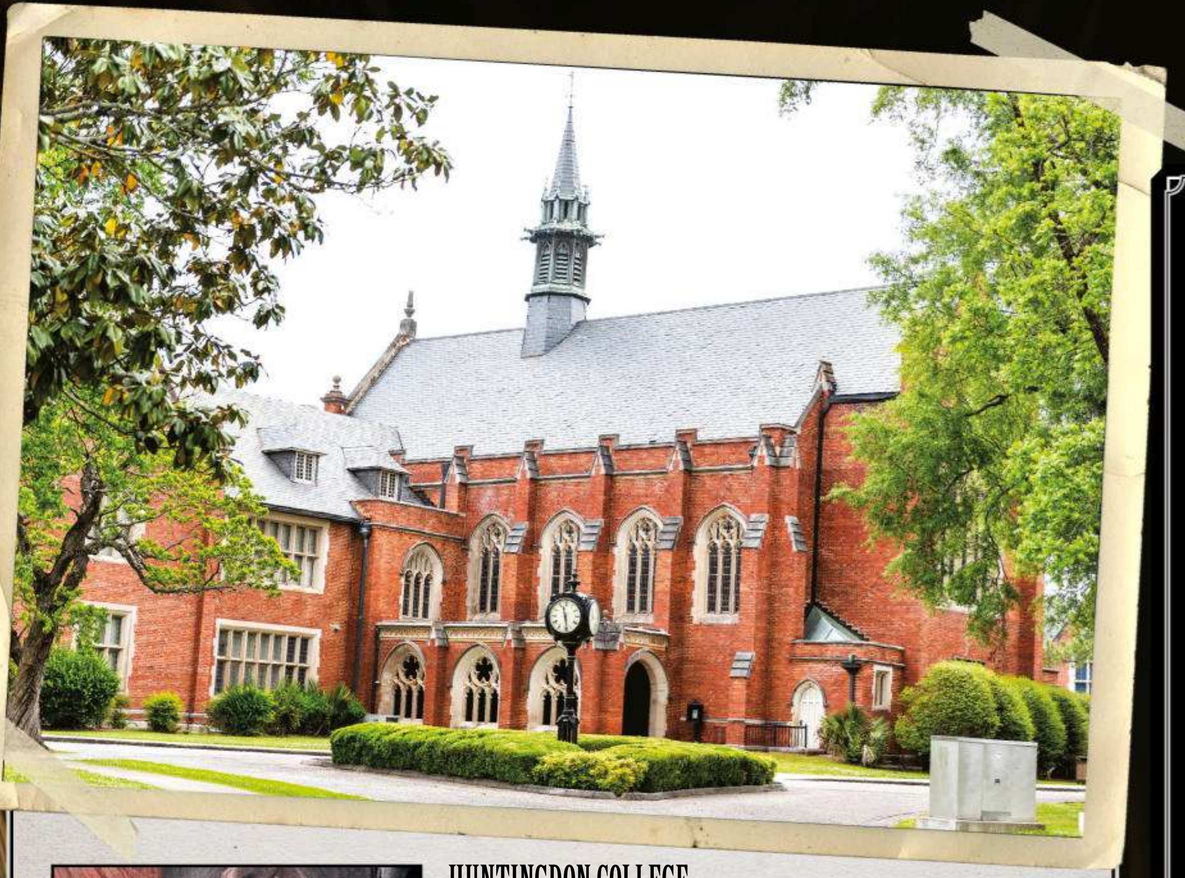
Image source: Getty; Alamy;

Image source: Wikipedia Commons/PHParsons

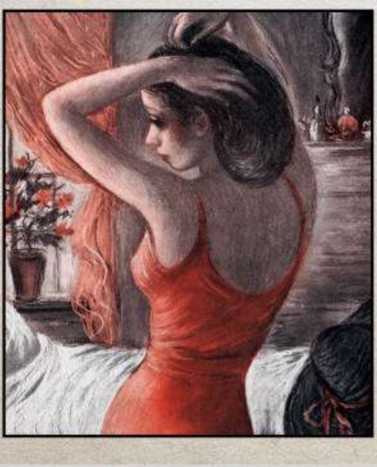
KIMBERLEY AFRICANA LIBRARY

Location: Kimberley, Northern Cape, South Africa
Time zone: UTC+2 **Currency:** South African rand

Footsteps have been heard pacing this book repository, opened in 1887 as the Kimberley Public Library, as well as the spectre of a Victorian era gentleman. The ghost is reported to be that of Bertram Dyer, who was the first qualified librarian in South Africa. While restoring the library's most valuable volumes, he also fiddled the accounts. When his fraudulent activity was discovered, he committed suicide by swallowing arsenic – a painful death that took three days.



HUNTINGDON COLLEGE



Location: Montgomery, Alabama, USA Time zone: UTC-6 Currency: US dollar

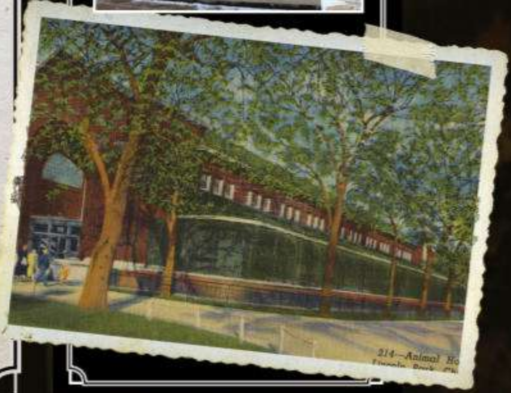
This former women's college is haunted by the spirit of Martha, known as The Red Lady. The Wednesday Addams of her day – surly and aloof – she was obsessed with the colour red, dressing entirely in crimson and furnishing her room in the fiery hue. Martha found it hard to make friends at Huntingdon, and she suffered a revolving door of dorm mates. When one particular roommate moved out, it had a profound effect on Martha. She felt abandoned by her only friend and her behaviour became bizarre, wandering eerily from dorm to dorm at night in a trance – until one day her former roommate went to check on her, only to discover a strange red light emanating from Martha's door. Peering inside, she discovered Martha dead, wrapped in her blood-soaked claret bed sheets having slit her wrists. Today, Martha haunts the fourth floor of Pratt Hall, still dressed in scarlet, a macabre reminder for students not to leave other outcasts alone in their rooms. Meanwhile, a ghost named Frank haunts the school's library.

LINCOLN PARK ZOO

Location: Chicago, Illinois, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

Part of Lincoln Park Zoo sits upon land that was formally the final resting place of more than 30,000 people – 12,000 of whom likely still remain buried beneath the park today. The Chicago City Cemetery, open from 1843 to 1859, was located in the very spot many animals now call their homes and is likely responsible for the reported paranormal sightings of ghostly Victorian ladies, ominous flickering lights and doors slamming all by themselves in the Lion's House basement toilets.

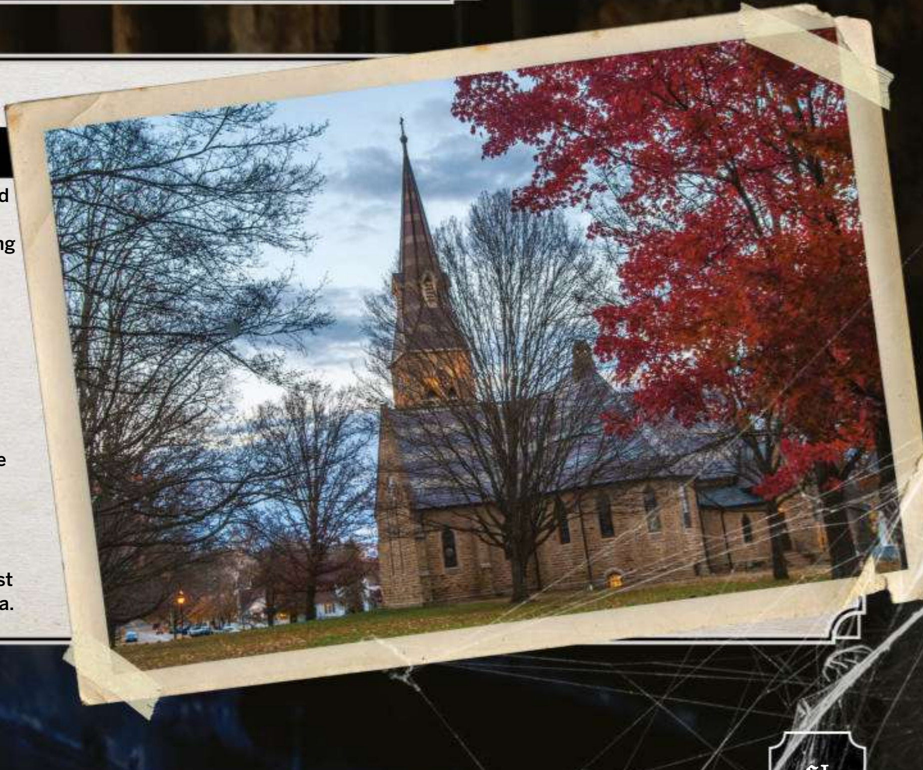
Lincoln Park Zoo



KEYON COLLEGE

Location: Gambia, Ohio, USA
Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

Kenyon College has a reputation for being one of the most haunted colleges in the US, with students reporting supernatural sightings every year. The ghost of Stuart Pierson has been spotted wandering Old Kenyon Residence Hall, as well as the nearby disused railroad tracks. The freshman was reportedly blindfolded and left on the tracks during a Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity initiation in 1905 and tragically hit by an unscheduled train. The ghosts of those who perished in a fire in 1949 also haunt Old Kenyon. Many have experienced a ghost fire alarm, sudden chills and the feeling of a presence. Caples Residence Hall is haunted by student Doug Shafer, who was discovered at the bottom of the elevator shaft in 1979 – not long after the building opened. Students of Caples have reported feeling someone sit or lie on their bed as they fall asleep. There's also 'The Greenhouse Ghost', a diver who broke his neck and drowned in the Shaffer Pool, now the Shaffer Dance Studio, and the 'Gates of Hell' – stone pillars that are an omen of doomed friendships. Professor of Humanities Tim Shutt gives campus ghost tours and the university shares its haunted history via social media.



SHOCK TREATMENT!

If Victorian hospitals weren't creepy enough with their derelict halls, wards, clinics, and equipment, why not add the tortured souls of those who never left?

Written by Rosie Cranie-Higgs

ARADALE LUNATIC ASYLUM

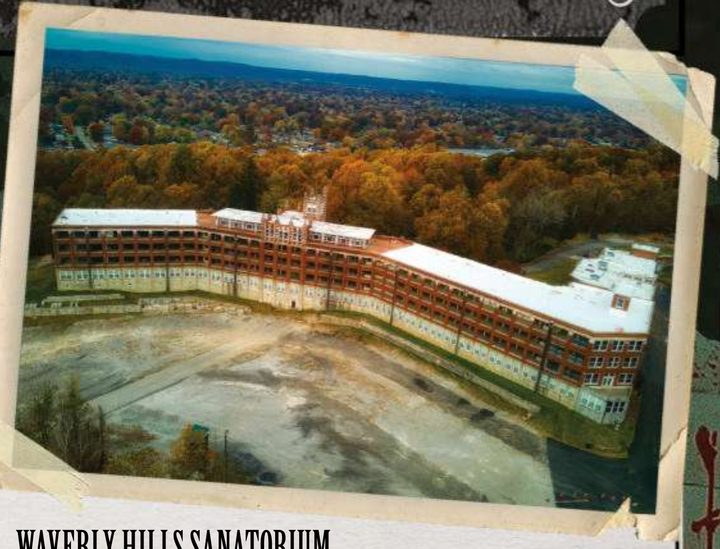
Location: Ararat, Victoria, Australia
Time zone: UTC+10 Currency: Australian dollar

Atop the local "Madman's Hill" sits Aradale Lunatic Asylum, opened in 1867 and, with its ha-ha walls, cut off from civilisation. It treated the criminally insane – alongside those with mental health issues and then little-understood neurodivergences such as autism and Downs Syndrome – with straitjackets, ECT, and lobotomies, and some say it's the most haunted place in Australia.

The ghost of Governor George Fiddimont patrols the stairs in his hobnailed boots and Gary Webb, who severed his genitals three times during his stay, haunts his former room, screaming at visitors to leave. In the shock therapy ward, visitors' heads tingle, and in J Ward, the criminal wing, people report nausea, terror, and being pushed and bitten.

Now the grounds hold an olive grove, vineyard, and lavender farm belonging to Melbourne Polytechnic, but ghost tours are available… if you dare.

Image source: Wikipedia Commons/Public Domain



WAVERLY HILLS SANATORIUM

Location: Louisville, Kentucky, USA Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollars

Although Waverly Hills opened in 1910 as the USA's most advanced tuberculosis sanatorium, tens of thousands of patients died there and its 1961 closure was a godsend for TB sufferers.

Why? Because its treatments were torture. Balloons were implanted in the lungs and filled with air, ribs and chest muscles were removed so the lungs had more oxygen, and lobectomies extracted whole lung lobes. Many recipients ended up in the 600-foot body chute, where visitors today spot spirits and balls of light. Other apparitions in the sanatorium itself include a little girl in the solarium, a woman with bleeding wrists pleading for help, and a white-coated man entering the ruined kitchen to the scent of baking bread.

The worst is Room 502, used for patients with mental health issues. Two nurses committed suicide there, in 1928 and 1932, and while the first suffered from depression, the second is thought to have been tormented by the supernatural. Today, visitors to 502 report themselves and others acting out of character in disturbing, sometimes malicious ways.

TRANS-ALLEGHENY LUNATIC ASYLUM

Location: Weston, West Virginia, USA Time zone: UTC -5 Currency: US dollar

Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum is a lesson in how not to treat mental health issues. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, and limited light, heat, and furniture, combined with bloodletting, insulin coma therapy, and "ice-pick" transorbital lobotomies, led the hospital to become a violent house of horrors. Uncontrollable patients were kept in cages, and some committed murder.

By the early 1900s, ghost stories were running riot. In the Civil War Wing lurks Ruth, pushing male visitors against the wall. A man who was bludgeoned to death by fellow patients haunts the spots where he died. Nine-year-old Lily sits in a toy-filled room, waiting to play; toys and a music box move by themselves. With a black mass called the "Creeper" crawling along the walls and screams from the ECT room ricocheting down the halls, this isn't somewhere anyone should linger.

NEWSHAM PARK HOSPITAL

Location: Liverpool, England, UK
Time zone: UTC 0 Currency: Pound sterling

In the early 20th century a nurse who saw ghosts was found dead at the top of a staircase. Patients often mentioned "the children", during a seance a boy appeared behind a guest, hissing maniacally, and in the naughty boys corridor, where misbehaving orphans were locked in cupboards, one still screams to be let out. With 16,000 orphans cremated and dumped in a pit, it's no wonder the poor souls can't leave.

BEELITZ-HEILSTÄTTEN HOSPITAL

Location: Beelitz, Brandenburg, Germany
Time zone: UTC +1 Currency: Euro

Opened in 1898 as a tuberculosis sanatorium, Beelitz later functioned as a field hospital during both world wars and even treated Hitler. The 1990s saw Wolfgang Schmidt kill six people connected to the hospital. In 2008, a photographer lured a model here before murdering her and engaging in necrophilia. While visitors report various paranormal experiences, some say the most haunting thing about Beelitz is history itself.

THE OLD ROYAL VICTORIA

Location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: Canadian dollar

This castle-like institution already looks haunted, and that's exactly why, in 2015, it was relocated. For Halloween 2013, staff members published their numerous paranormal experiences on the hospital's website. Plus, in the 1950s and 1960s, unconsenting patients were subjected to mind-control research experiments under the CIA's MKUltra program. It's no surprise that by 2015, patients and staff felt the place was toxic.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

PHANTOMS OF THE OPERA

It's not just the Paris Opera House that boasts a legendary phantom. Pick the right theatre, and you might see more than an excellent performance!

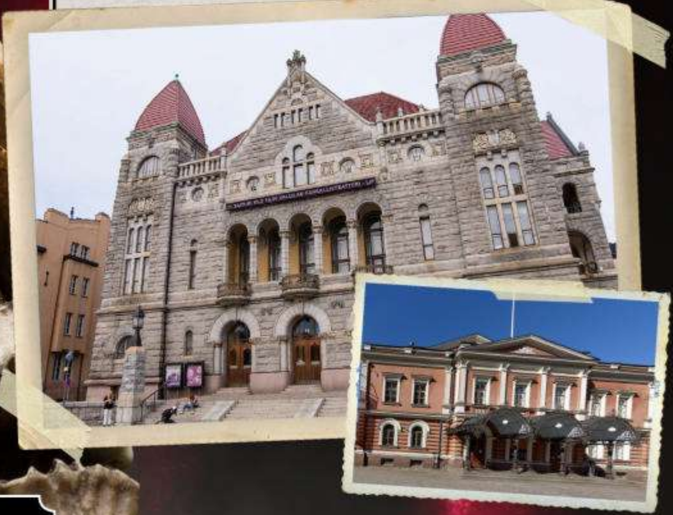
Written by Icy Sedgwick

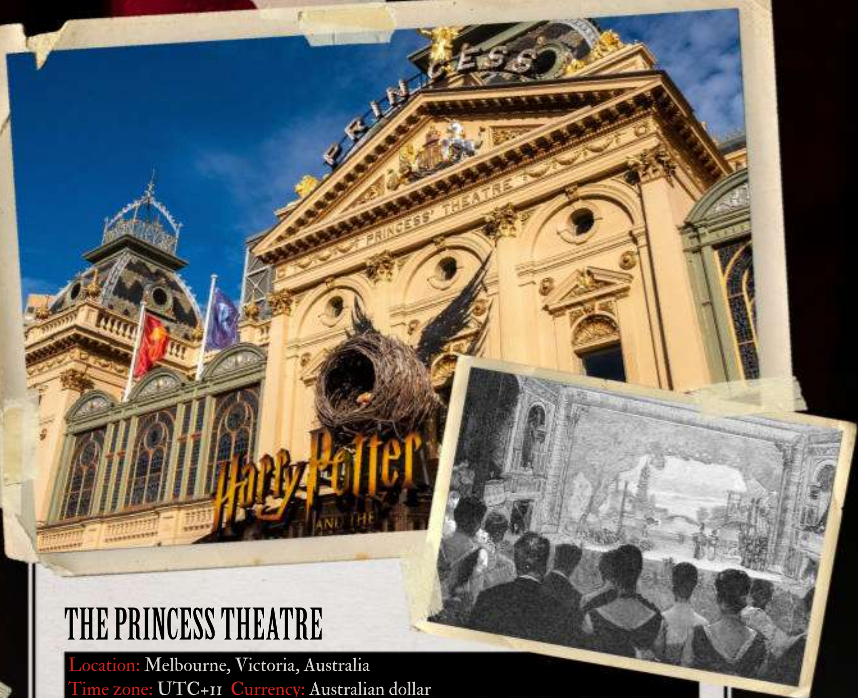
HELSINKI'S HAUNTED THEATRES

Location: Helsinki, Uusimaa, Finland
Time zone: UTC+2 Currency: Euro

Two of Helsinki's theatres date back to the 1870s, so it's unsurprising they boast ghost stories. The Finnish National Theatre is haunted by the ghosts of actors Aarne Leppänen and Urho Somersalmi, as well as a ghost known as the White Lady. Somersalmi murdered his actress wife in 1962 before hanging himself. Theatre staff claim to have seen him carrying an axe through the backstage corridors. The White Lady wanders the same area.

The Alexander Theatre hosts the ghost of an army officer who died in Crimea. The bricks used to build the theatre came from a fortress in Åland, which was bombed during the Crimean War and with them came his ghost. Strange occurences include a director who felt someone pat him on the back while he sat alone in the auditorium and an actor who saw a blue figure floating on the balcony. Children practising ballet also saw military boots floating in mid-air, which sent them screaming.





THE PRINCESS THEATRE

Location: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Time zone: UTC+11 Currency: Australian dollar

The Princess Theatre is Australia's oldest surviving entertainment site. Built in 1854 during the gold rush, it has several ghosts, but Frederick Federici captures the most attention.

British baritone Federici (Frederick Baker), sang the role of Mephistopheles in Faust. At the end of the performance, Mephistopheles sinks through a trapdoor back to hell. On 3 March 1888, Federici had a heart attack on the trapdoor. However, even though he died in the green room, the company insisted he'd taken his bows on stage.

People claim to have seen a handsome man in evening dress and actors have felt someone pass them in empty corridors, while lights flash during performances. Even now, the theatre reserves a seat for him every opening night; his appearances are apparently good luck.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET
7

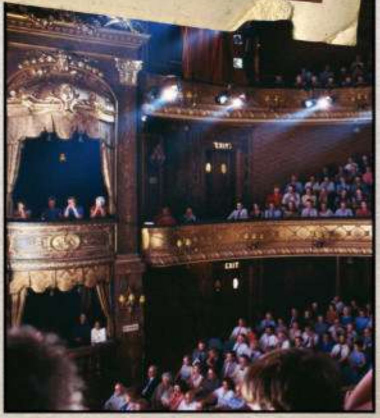
THE THEATRE ROYAL

Location: London, England, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

The current Theatre Royal dates back to 1812 and is the fourth Theatre Royal on the site since 1663. It has several ghosts, including performers Charles Macklin, Joseph Grimaldi, and Dan Leno, but the most famous is the Man in Grey. He always sits in the same Upper Circle seat at the end of the fourth row before heading along the walkway and disappearing through the wall.

Most legends say he was a wealthy 18th-century gentleman who was having an affair with an actress. He met her in the Upper Circle, but one night, his rival waited for him instead, stabbing him in the chest and hiding his body in an alcove that he walled up. Workers found a skeleton with a knife through its ribs in a wall cavity in the Upper Circle during refurbishment work in 1848.

Like Federici, the Man in Grey is a good omen. Whenever he's seen, the play is successful. He's been a lucky charm for box office hits *The King and I*, *South Pacific* and *Oklahoma*, among others.



NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE

Location: London, England, UK
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

The New Amsterdam Theatre opened in 1903. Broadway's oldest working theatre, it was restored by Disney in the 1990s and also hosted the Ziegfeld Follies in the 1910s and 20s, explaining the identity of its famous ghost, Olive Thomas.

Olive was silent film legend Mary Pickford's sister-in-law and a chorus girl in the Ziegfeld Follies. She died in 1920. Some say it was accidental poisoning, others claim suicide. Staff report someone touching their back, though no one is there when they turn around, while audience members have confused her with back-of-house staff. Stagehands see a woman in a 1920s flapper dress before she walks through the wall.

She's Broadway's most active ghost, and her photo stands at every entrance so staff can greet her.

> "Tourists hear laughter and a piano being played inside the empty building"

BIRD CAGE THEATRE
1881
The Original Bird Cage Theatre

THE BIRD CAGE THEATRE

Location: Tombstone, Arizona, USA
Time zone: UTC-7 Currency: US dollar

The Bird Cage Theatre opened in 1881 and closed in 1892 with the closure of the town's silver mines. It had a bawdy reputation, hosting comedians, a strong woman act, magic shows, Cornish wrestling, and sex workers in the boxes. Legendary lawman Wyatt Earp was a regular here and had an affair with a performer in one of the private rooms.

It's no surprise the Bird Cage Theatre is haunted - 26 people died here during shootouts and stabbings, or by suicide. One murder victim, a madam named Margarita, had her heart prised out of her chest with a stiletto dagger by a rival madam. Some visitors say they've seen a young woman wearing nothing but bloomers in the building - is it Margarita?

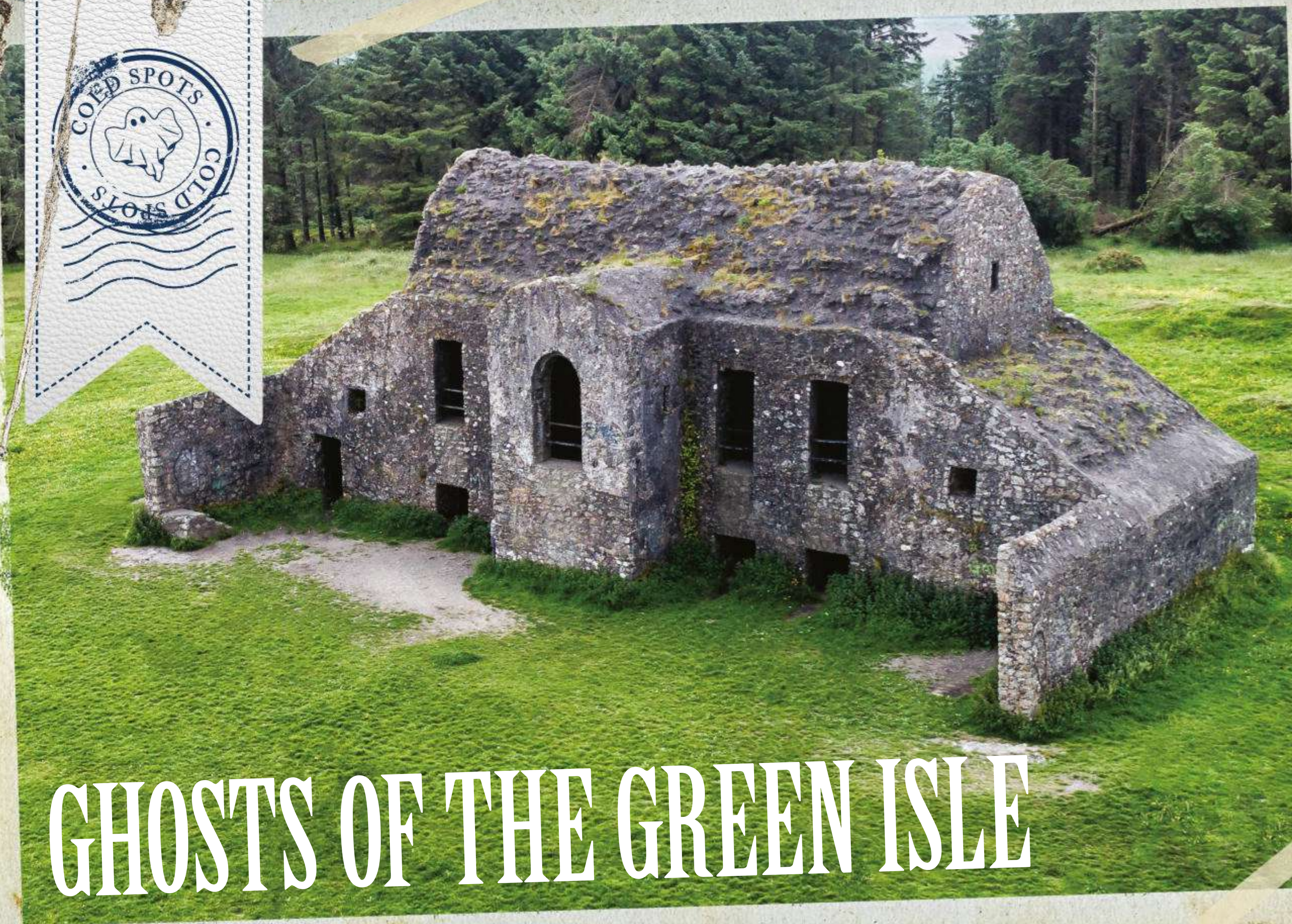
Tourists hear laughter and a piano being played inside the empty building, and some smell cigars and whiskey. Items move around the theatre of their own accord, and in the 1980s, invisible hands partially strangled the owner during a seance.

THE BISBEE SEANCE ROOM

Location: Bisbee, Arizona, USA
Time zone: UTC-7
Currency: US dollar

The Bisbee Seance Room is a real theatrical experience. Get whisked back in time and explore the spooky history of one of America's most haunted towns in the unique setting of a Victorian parlour.

THE BISBEE SEANCE ROOM
YES
NO
FAREWELL



GHOSTS OF THE GREEN ISLE

An eerie presence hangs over the capital city of the beautiful emerald isle, thanks to its somewhat brutal history of housing tortured souls in both life and death

Location:
Dublin, Ireland

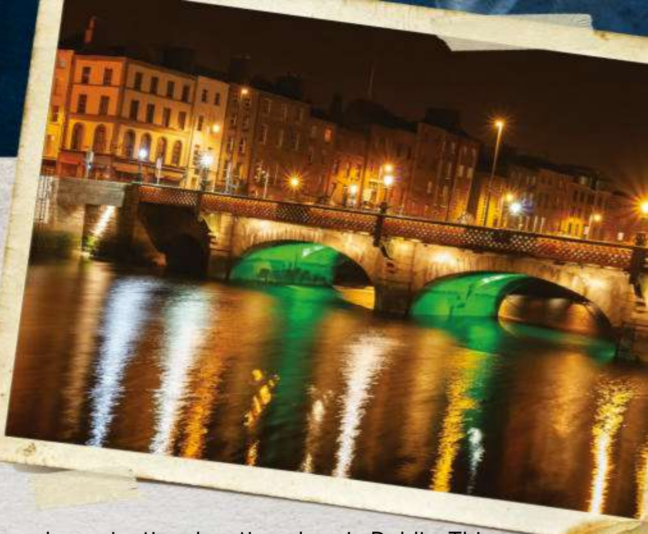
Time zone:
UTC+0

Currency:
Euro

Tips: Visit in late October for the Bram Stoker Festival (see opposite page) an annual, four-day, city-wide event

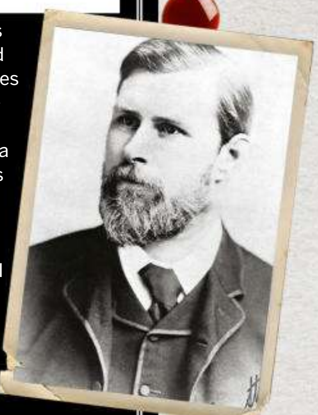
One of the most famous and oldest haunted hideouts lies just south of the River Liffey. A stone's throw from the Dublin City Council building, sits the Brazen Head Pub on Bridge Street, where Ireland's 18th Century republican Robert Emmet was known to nurse a spirit or two while he plotted a way to bring independence to his beloved country. He was a popular figure among the like-minded men and women who visited the establishment but in 1803, after a failed revolt, he was found guilty of treason and ordered to be hung, drawn and quartered in Thomas Street, in front of St Catherine's church. His remains were lost after his execution, which means that he has no official resting place. But, if you look closely among the empty barstools, you may spot Emmet's ghost, who has reportedly been sitting at the bar ever since, keeping an eye on his enemies.

Making your way across the river and into the northside of Dublin, another spooky setting can be found only 300 metres from Emmet's haunting grounds, in Church Street. Situated behind Dublin's Four Courts, down the cold stone steps of St. Michan's Church, visitors will descend into a crypt – a final resting place of some of the city's most noble former residents, in what is the oldest parish church on the northside of the capital. Visitors will find inside limbs protruding from ajar coffins, which are stacked haphazardly on top of one another, and open coffins which showcase bodies preserved by the dry, cold air of the church. But keep your senses about you – visitors have reported the



BRINGING BRAM BACK FROM THE BEYOND

Celebrating the gothic, the supernatural and the ghoulish, Dublin's annual festival pays homage to the writer of the gothic horror 1897 novel 'Dracula' by Abraham Stoker



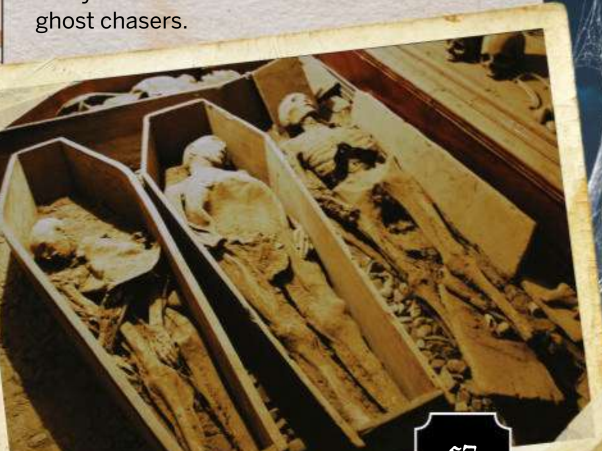
Abraham Stoker's seventh published book, which centres around the blood-thirsty vampire Count Dracula, is a staple of all things spooky. Stoker, who was born at a small home in Clontarf, a coastal suburb on the north side of the city, drew inspiration from Transylvanian folklore as well as his hometown. One of the most notable places which inspired the great writer and his novel was St Michan's Church, and the creepy crypt which is still a major attraction today. Every year the festival brings Stoker's work back to the forefront of the city with plays, spectaculars and other events inspired by his works.

feeling of being watched, sombre whispers of the deceased and even an icy hand upon their shoulder. In and among the dead who lay resting in St. Michan's Church are legendary 18th century lawyers, the Sheares brothers, as well as four mummies known as 'The Big Four' They are: The Crusader, a woman known only as 'The Unknown', a man known as 'The Thief', an another woman nicknamed 'The Nun'.

Continue out of the city centre and you will find John Kavanagh's pub, or what is more commonly known as The Gravediggers Pub. Located at the southeastern tip of Glasnevin Cemetery's wall, distinguishable by its imposing wrought iron gates, the cemetery was a first-of-its- kind when it opened in 1832. A public outcry about the discrimination against Catholics, even in their death, led to Glasnevin Cemetery welcoming people of all faiths making it the first non-denominational resting place in Dublin. This workingman's bar opened just a year after the cemetery. The main entrance closed in 1970, but ghosts of more than a million Irish residents still surround this city pub. Some have reported seeing the spirit of an older gentleman dressed in tweed sitting at the end of the bar before vanishing at closing time. The graveyard itself is at the centre of some spooky stories. Consisting of 124 acres of land visitors have reported sightings of many a wandering spirit, however, one such resident is the ghost of a Newfoundland dog who starved to death when his master, John McNeill Boyd died. The loyal pet refused to leave his master's graveside in the cemetery.

On the outskirts of the city, where our mini tour finishes, stands a burnt out shell of a former site said to house satan worshipers and witches known as the Hellfire Club (see page 86). The location was originally a simple grave marked by a cairn. However, in the 18th century, the site received a huge overall thanks to Irish politician and landowner William Connoly, and was turned into a hunting lodge. Locals believed the creation of the building had angered spirits so much it tore the roof off the lodge in a rage. Connolly died four years after the building was erected; his building was rented by an Irish member of the Hellfire club. Legend has it that one evening the members were playing cards when they found themselves in the company of the devil himself, his disguise given away by the lone hoof spotted beneath his cloak. It's now considered one of Ireland's most haunted buildings, with reports of foul smells and strange noises emanating from the ruins at night, as well as shadow figures and the sensation of strangulation. This and many more stories make it a must-see for ghost chasers.

> "PAST PATRIOTS AND RIGHTEOUS RESIDENTS OF IRELAND'S CAPITAL REMAIN CHAINED TO THEIR FAIR CITY, EAGER TO MIX WITH THE LIVING AND REMIND THEM OF THEIR PRESENCE"



Images source: Getty; Alamy;

PARANORMAL PRISONS

It's been more than a life sentence for these incarcerated spirits, still trapped within the walls of the prisons they were left to perish within

Written by Rosie Cranie-Higgs

THE TOWER OF LONDON

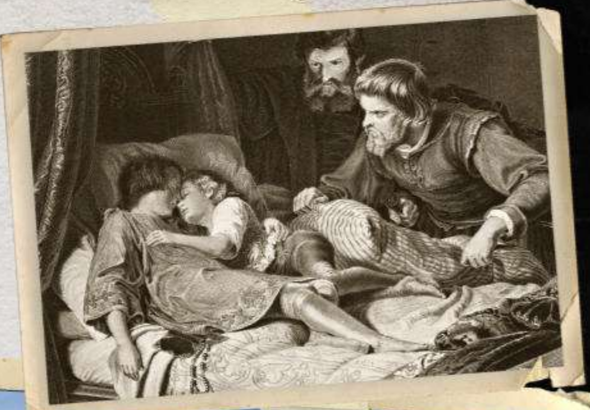
Location: London, England, UK **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

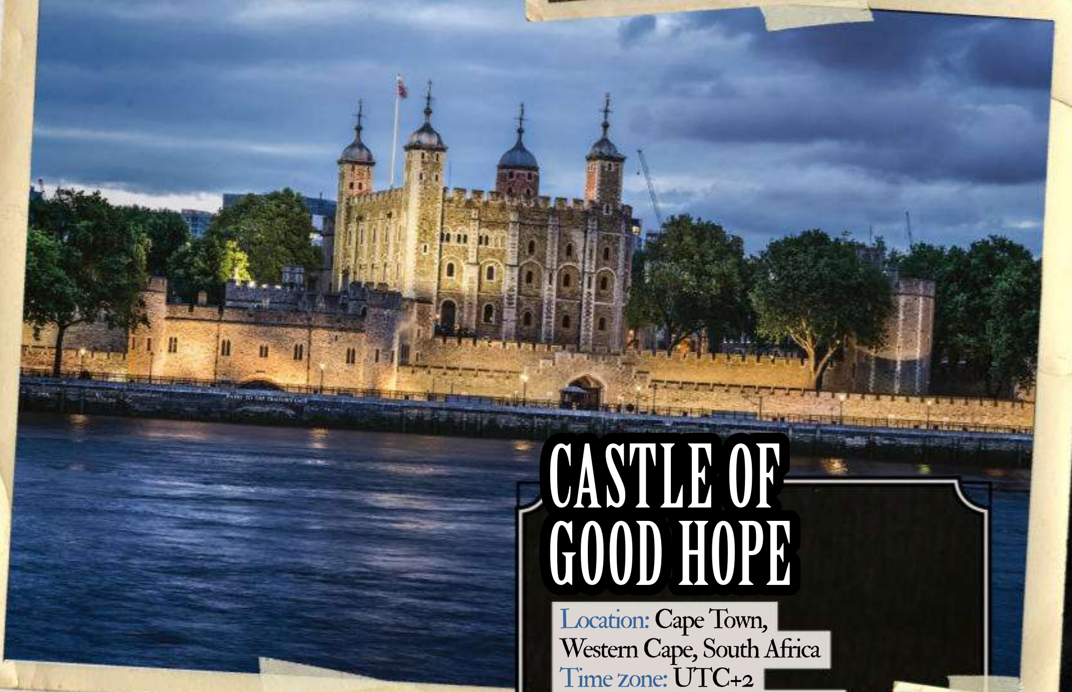
Prison, menagerie, execution site, arsenal. The Tower of London has been many things. Tradition and superstition still rules this medieval fortress with the iconic Yeoman Warders, a.k.a. Beefeaters, patrolling the grounds donned in red Tudor uniforms and six clipped-wing resident ravens acting as the guardians of the Tower – according to 17th-century belief, should they leave, both Tower and state will fall.

Prominent prisoners include Anne Boleyn, Henry VI, Lady Jane Grey, Guy Fawkes, and the boy princes, all of whom reportedly never left. Headless Anne Boleyn wanders corridors or leads a procession down the chapel aisle to her burial site. Henry VI, stabbed while praying, appears in the Wakefield Tower at the last stroke of midnight. Teenage Lady Jane Grey roams the battlements, and Guy Fawkes howls in the Council Chamber. Edward V and his brother Richard appear in nightshirts clutching each other in the White Tower, also haunted by the wispy, unidentified White Lady, whose stench of cheap perfume makes visitors sick.

But it's not just the Tower that's cursed. Centuries of violence seems to have seeped deep into soil on which it stands. The surrounding area, historically known for its debauchery and squalor, was the hunting ground of Jack the Ripper and a regular haunt of numerous ghosts.

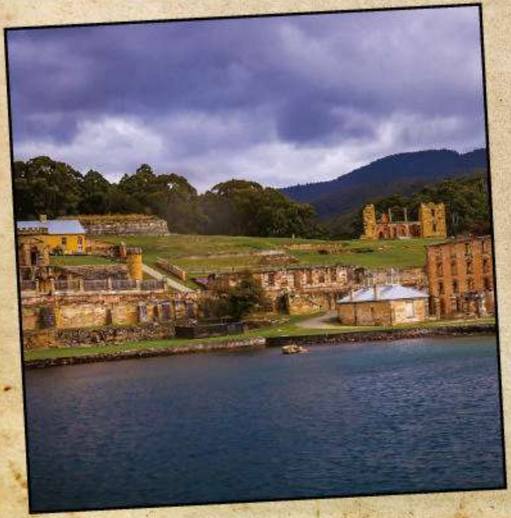
> "Prominent prisoners include Anne Boleyn.. Guy Fawkes, and the boy princes"





ALCATRAZ PORT ARTHUR

Location: Port Arthur, Tasmania, Australia **Time zone:** UTC +11 **Currency:** Australian dollar



The "inescapable" penal colony of Port Arthur is widely considered Alcatraz's predecessor. The prison was dubbed hell on Earth due to its position on the Tasman Peninsula, surrounded by alleged shark-infested waters. The 23-hour-a-day sensory deprivation led to many inmates becoming mentally ill.

In the Junior Medical Officer's basement, where illegal medical experiments were carried out on cadavers, eyes appear on the walls and bloody faces on the stone. The Blue Lady wanders the grounds, searching for her unborn child. In the Separate Prison, visitors report being scratched. The most tragic ghost is a young boy, whose nighttime wails echo the cries before his execution.

CASTLE OF GOOD HOPE

Location: Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
Time zone: UTC+2
Currency: South African rand

The oldest Dutch colonial building in South Africa, the 17th-century Castle of Good Hope was once a ruthless prison. Punishments included dismemberment, being dragged along by a horse, and even pierced with a stake, so unsurprisingly, it's haunted by a few ghosts. Voices echo in the dungeons; a luminous man throws himself from the battlements; a ghostly black dog lunges at visitors, vanishing before he can bite; Lady Anne Barnard attends balls in a period ballgown and Governor Pieter Gijsbert van Noodt, cursed at the gallows and dead the same day, swears a blue streak for anyone who'll listen.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

OHIO STATE REFORMATORY

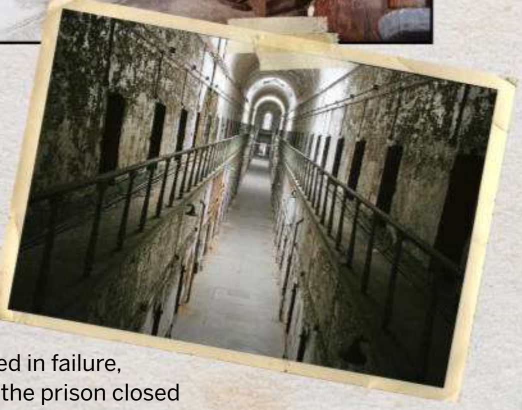
Location: Mansfield, Ohio, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

Masquerading as a French castle while aiming to reform young male offenders, Ohio State Reformatory ran from 1896 to 1990, when it closed due to a class action lawsuit claiming inhumane conditions. The ghosts of these abused boys and, from the mid-20th century hardened adult criminals in maximum security, move furniture, slam doors, and throw pebbles at visitors. A guard killed in solitary confinement ("the hole") in 1932 still does his rounds, jabbing guests with his nightstick, and figures of shadow and light can be glimpsed, particularly in the attic.

FORT DELAWARE

Location: Pea Patch Island, Delaware, USA **Time zone:** UTC -5 **Currency:** US dollar

On Pea Patch Island in the Delaware River sits Fort Delaware, built in the mid-1800s. During the Civil War, it housed Confederate captives (up to 12,595 at once). The fort was commanded at this time by a man nicknamed General Terror, and its dark history of starvation, sickness, and suffocating overcrowding (plus prisoners fighting over rats to eat) caused dozens of deaths a day. Expect anything from a portrait turning to a skull to being prodded by poltergeists, from echoes of Civil War cannons to spirits peering at you around corners. Five-hour ghost tours are held in October, and it looks like you're in for a treat.



EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY

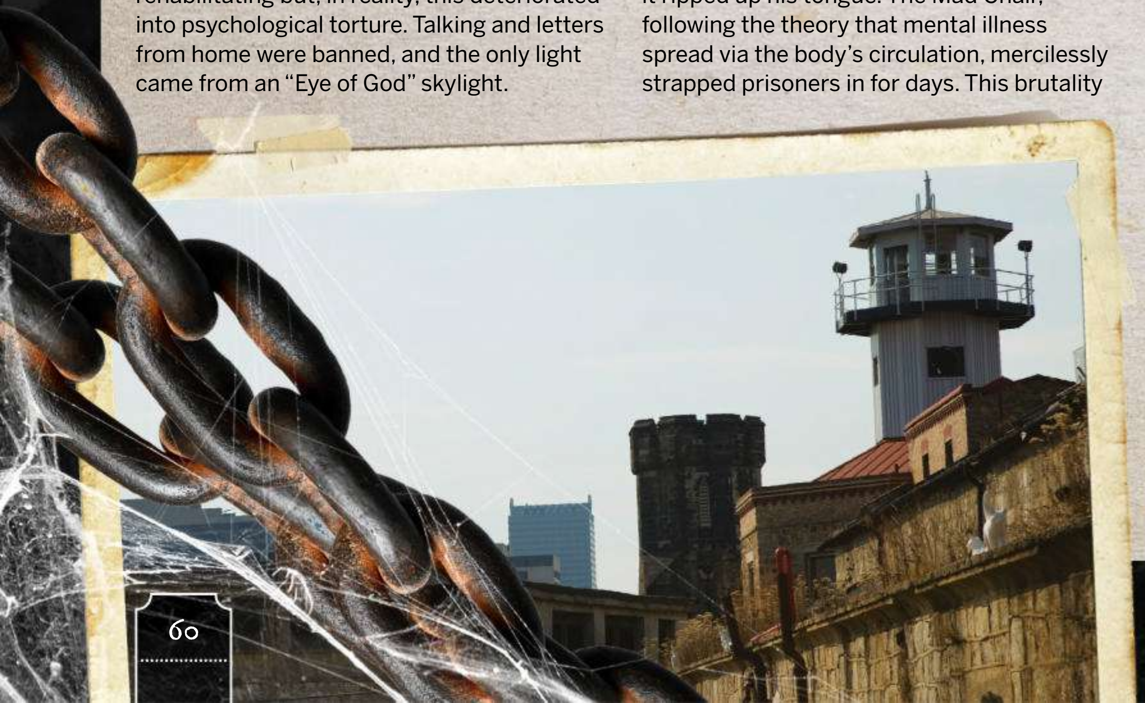
Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA **Time zone:** UTC -5 **Currency:** US dollar

Opened in 1829, Eastern State Penitentiary aimed to revolutionise prisons with its Quaker-inspired system. Prisoners were meant to spend most of their solitary days reflecting and rehabilitating but, in reality, this deteriorated into psychological torture. Talking and letters from home were banned, and the only light came from an "Eye of God" skylight.

Eventually, this torture plunged into the physical. A cast-iron gag over inmates' tongues, chained to their wrist shackles, stopped them speaking and, in at least one case, caused the inmate to bleed out after it ripped up his tongue. The Mad Chair, following the theory that mental illness spread via the body's circulation, mercilessly strapped prisoners in for days. This brutality ended in failure, and the prison closed in 1971.

Today, Eastern State Penitentiary embraces its grisly legacy with one of the US's top-rated haunted attractions, Halloween Nights. TV crews have captured disembodied voices and roaming apparitions. Guests themselves report a man in a crumbling, inaccessible guard tower and the "Soap Lady", who sits in the last cell in the women's cellblock, dressed in white. There's also cackling in cellblock 12, shadowy figures flitting along the walls in cellblock 6, and, in cellblock 4, a parade of ghostly faces.

These eerie stories have been corroborated since the 1940s and not even Al Capone, the most infamous inmate, was immune. Despite his cell having luxury rugs, oil paintings, and a radio, he was reportedly terrorised by a ghost named Jimmy.



ALCATRAZ ISLAND

Location: San Francisco, California, USA **Time zone:** UTC-8 **Currency:** US dollar

A favourite spot for dark tourism, Alcatraz was considered inescapable. During the Civil War, it housed military prisoners, and from 1934 to 1963 it served as a federal prison for incorrigible villains such as Al Capone and the original Machine Gun Kelly. Worldwide.

It's notorious, but also notoriously haunted. Centuries-old Native American history documents The White Rock being thronged by evil spirits, and tribal lawbreakers would be banished here to live among them. Today, visitors report crying, moaning, deafening clanging, and a malevolent feeling in cellblock C's laundry room, where hitman Abie Maldowitz ("Butcher") was killed in the 1940s by a fellow inmate.

The stories don't stop there. While Alcatraz was still operational, guards reported cannon fire and gunshots so real that they believed the prisoners were escaping. In the old hospital ward, screams echo from inmates who were secured to a table until they calmed down. If this wasn't enough, in D block, the most haunted section, a man was found strangled in cell 14D in the 1940s. Rumour has it that the night before, he was screaming that a glowing-eyed monster known as "The Thing" was trying to kill him. Many visitors report being smothered in a horrific sense of cold, and the cell is often almost 20 degrees below the rest of the block.

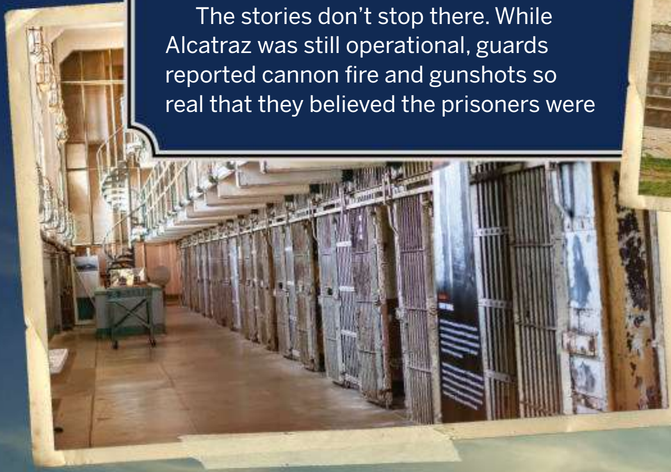
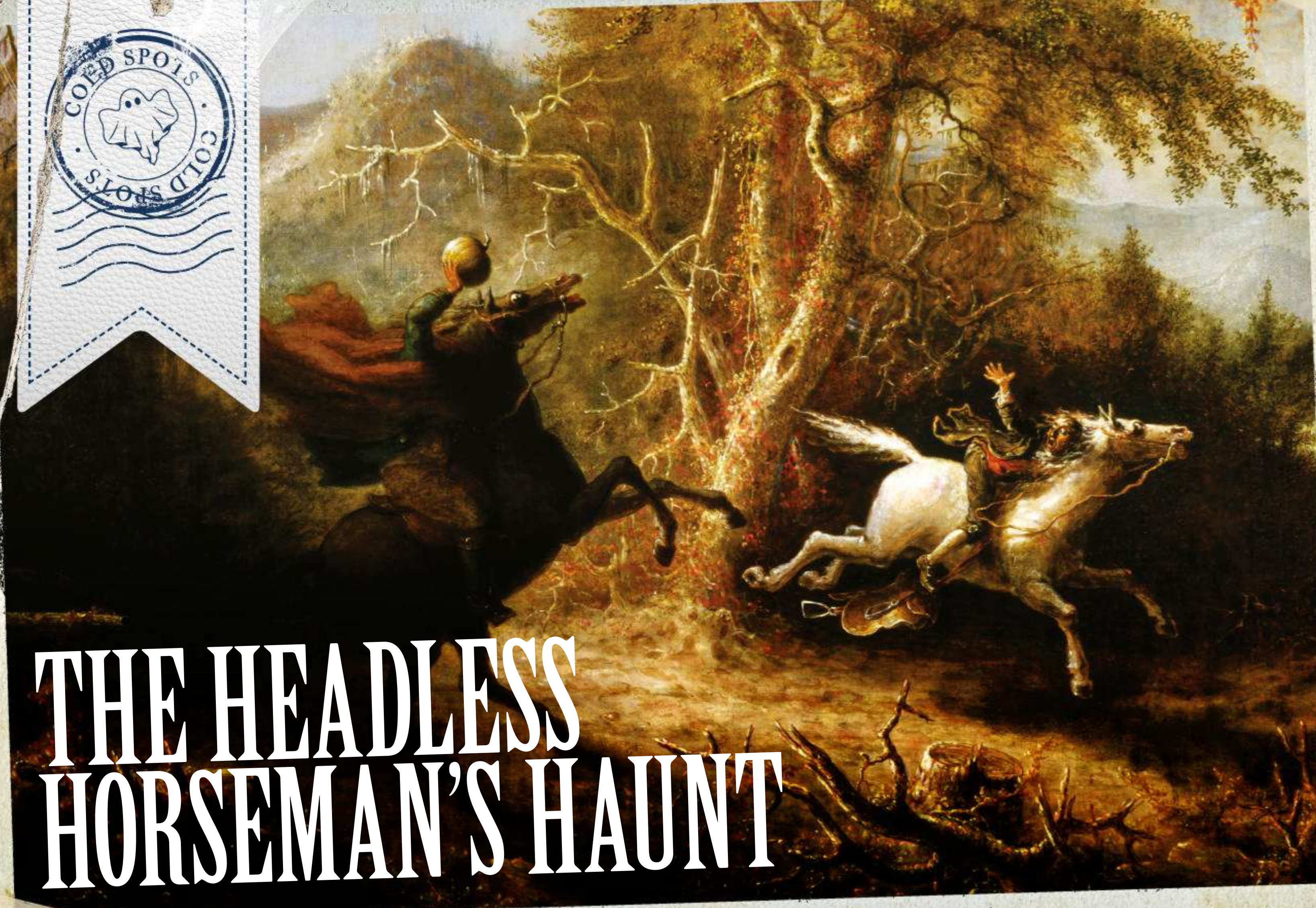


Image source: Getty; Alamy



THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN'S HAUNT

Many know Sleepy Hollow from TV and film, but the story is 200 years old and the village is as real (and macabre) as can be

Location:
Sleepy Hollow, New York State, USA

Time zone:
UTC-5

Currency:
US dollar

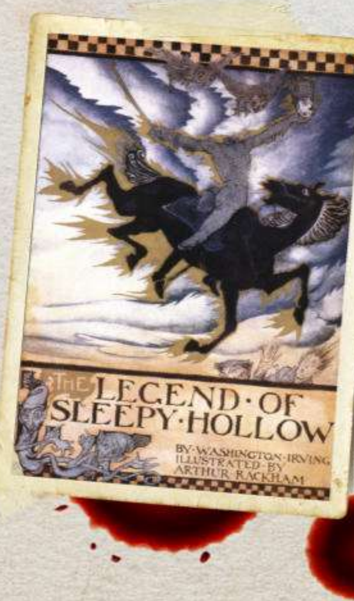
Tips: Visit author Washington Irving's grave in the town's cemetery

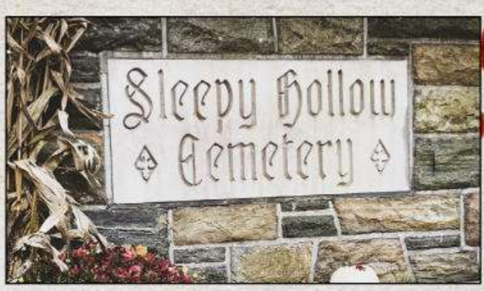
Possibly the most haunted village in America, Sleepy Hollow flings its arms open wide to the spooky. Even the old-style wooden welcome sign hints at Gothic, ghostly happenings ahead, and in 1996, the village changed its name from North Tarrytown in honour of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

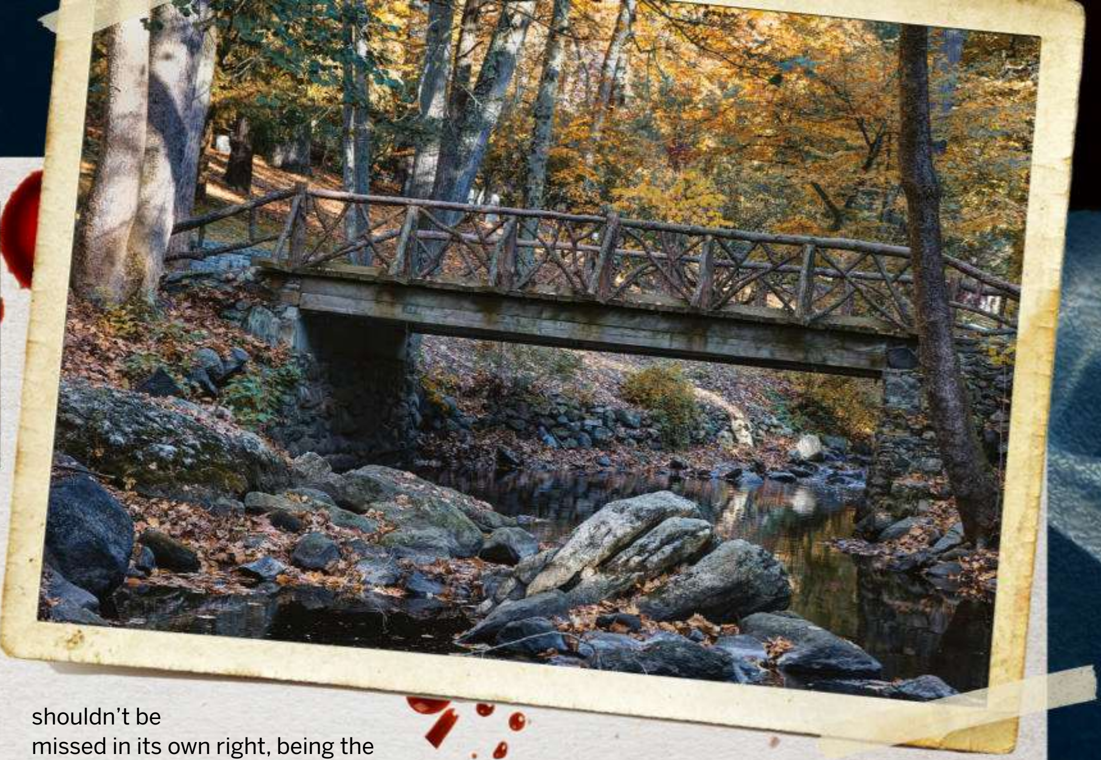
But the town's most famous son, author Washington Irving didn't come up with the first creepy local tale. Three centuries-old spirits are said to haunt Raven Rock: a lady in white who died in a snowstorm, a Native American girl who was driven to her death by a jealous lover, and a colonial girl who flung herself from the rock to escape an amorous raider. Cut to the 18th and 19th centuries, when the townspeople were quick to label people witches. In 1770, a doctor named Hulda was pronounced a witch by the minister of the Old Dutch Church, although she largely healed the sick by leaving baskets of herbs on their doorsteps.

To be fair, though, Irving left Sleepy Hollow's most well known mark. His inspiration is thought to be manifold but the most popular tale, backed up by the historical record, dates to the 1776 Revolutionary War. A German sharpshooter on horseback was decapitated by a cannonball during the Battle of White Plains, and his body was buried at Sleepy Hollow's Old Dutch Church. Legend and Irving have it that the Horseman rises at night to search for his head, and anyone who sees his mutilated spirit is instantly condemned to die.

Chilling? Absolutely, and Sleepy Hollow knows it. Every autumn, the local legend is







brought to life. The Haunted Hayride and block party are a huge amount of fun, and Hulda's Night at Rockefeller State Park Preserve is an atmospheric, legend-filled, lantern-lit journey through the woods that's difficult to capture in print.

At any time of the year, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery is worth seeing, and Washington Irving's grave is decorated at Hallowe'en. Cemetery tours take place by lantern light, with town tales of insanity, corruption, and murder-suicide adding atmosphere to the Sleepy Hollow legend. The Old Dutch Church, the Headless Horseman's haunting ground, shouldn't be missed in its own right, being the second-oldest church in America.

The Headless Horseman Bridge is one of Sleepy Hollow's most popular spots. Although it's not the old bridge Irving wrote about which has long since rotted away, the replica just upstream looks suitably timeworn and folkloric. A sign marks the spot where the original bridge stood. Nearby, and possibly even better, is local artist Linda Perlmutter's sculpture of Ichabod Crane fleeing the Horseman, 18 feet tall, the colour of cinnamon, and fantastic to see among the autumn leaves.

For shoppers, Bella's Boutique offers Sleepy Hollow-themed memorabilia such as Headless Horseman t-shirts, prints by local artists, and books on local folklore. Sleepy Hollow Gifts, mostly online but sometimes set up outside Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, prides itself on being "the home of all things headless", including a Headless Horseman statue with a jack-o'-lantern head.

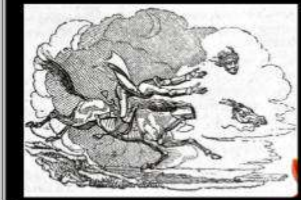
Finally, if you feel like an eerie, witchy hike, why not roam Rockefeller State Park Preserve – with trails such as Gory Brook and Witch's Spring, the longstanding ghost story of Spook Rock, and, of course, the hauntings of Raven Rock, who knows what you might meet on the trail?

> "A GERMAN SHARPSHOOTER ON HORSEBACK WAS DECAPITATED AND HIS BODY BURIED AT SLEEPY HOLLOW'S CHURCH"

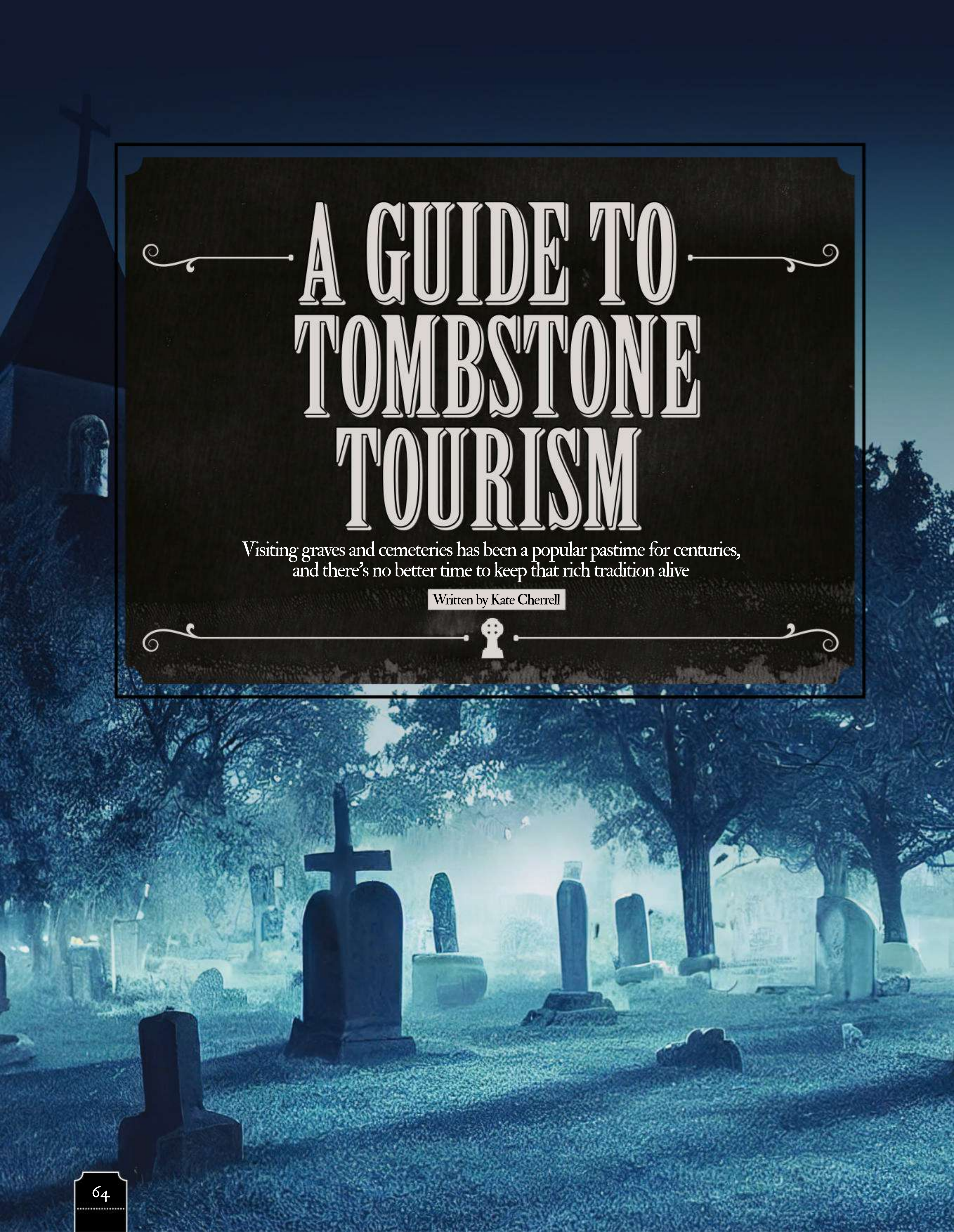
NOT THE ONLY HEADLESS HORSEMAN IN TOWN…ISH

From Sleepy Hollow to Ireland and beyond, tales like these span oceans

Another legendary headless horseman is the Irish dullahan, a headless rider on a black horse who either holds his head high or carries it under his arm. Similar to Sleepy Hollow's Headless Horseman, encountering him means death if he stops, but he's not a ghost; rather, he's Unseelie, a wicked fae in faery lore. Sometimes he rides with the Death Coach, formed entirely of bones with grinning lanterns made of skulls, where he carries a long whip made of a corpse's spine.



Images © Getty; Alamy

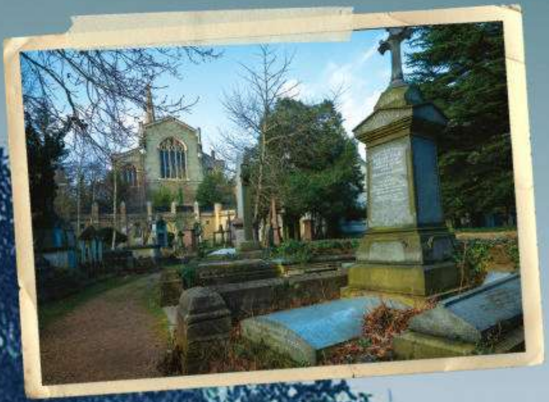


A GUIDE TO TOMBSTONE TOURISM

Visiting graves and cemeteries has been a popular pastime for centuries, and there's no better time to keep that rich tradition alive

Written by Kate Cherrell

Fresh air, beautiful scenery, history and wildlife await you. Being a tombstone tourist is an ancient tradition, as medieval pilgrims would travel afar to visit the grave or relic of a long-dead saint. Later, the Victorians helped to bring the dead and living together through the introduction of garden cemeteries. With footpaths, spaces for rest, decorative trees and fine architecture, they enabled the public to spend time with their ancestors, enjoying the space as a public park. Cemeteries can teach us so much about our history (both the bad and the good) and are an important and irreplicable link to the past. Visiting and celebrating graves for their artistry and history keeps stories alive and sites open for generations to come.



HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TOMBSTONE TOURIST

Most cemeteries welcome visitors, but there are a few guidelines to help you have a safe and enjoyable experience.

When visiting any cemetery, your behaviour should be respectful regardless, but be especially aware of people attending graves and interment ceremonies, and different countries and religions will have varying expectations of behaviour.

Try to plan your visit beforehand as most cemeteries will have opening hours, and will lock their gates at night. Be sure to check the cemetery's website for resources, maps and events. Many cemeteries operate cafes, shops and specialised tours, which can be a great introduction to the history of the site and also raises money for upkeep.

Research grave styles and symbols before your trip, especially when visiting Victorian cemeteries. An epitaph may be interesting enough, but looking at design choices such as carved butterflies, columns or hands may reveal some hidden sentiments and facts about the deceased that otherwise you may miss.

Most cemeteries encourage photography to capture the beauty of the site. However, in places of mass death and suffering, such as war and genocide memorials or concentration camps, be sensitive to where you are and what it means to others. Photography may be encouraged, but selfies may be inappropriate and distasteful.

When visiting the grave of a celebrity you admire, it can be tempting to try and take a souvenir home – please don't! Oscar Wilde's grave was covered in so much lipstick that the stone was permanently damaged from fans' affection, whereas singer Jim Morrison's grave was badly damaged by fans chipping off pieces of his headstone. It's also tempting to clean an old grave or make a rubbing, but serious damage can be done and should be left to the experts. Bleach and abrasive cleaning agents can remove the stone's protective outer layer leaving them vulnerable to shattering and splitting open in cold temperatures. Many grave mosses are also protected species and help to protect graves for centuries to come!

Finally, keep safe! Many sites can be hazardous, so be sure to wrap up warm, wear sensible footwear and be aware of your surroundings at all times. Tombstone tourism can be the most fun you have this side of the grave!

Left: Visiting graves and cemeteries can enrich your life and bring stories of the past into the present

Right: Church Cemetery in Nottingham, England has a huge variety of memorials

ARE YOU A TAPHOPHILE?

A taphophile (n. taphophilia) is someone who has an interest and enthusiasm for graves, cemeteries and funerals. Also known as a cemetery enthusiast or tombstone tourist.

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Wikipedia Commons/ Alan Murray-Rust

THE WORLD'S SPOOKIEST CEMETERIES

Cemeteries don't often make the list on tourists' 'must-see' places, but some of the greatest, most fascinating and strange places are actually sites of burial

Written by Kate Cherrell

Image source: Getty; Alamy

HIGHGATE CEMETERY

Location: London, England , UK **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

Located on a hill above the city, Highgate cemetery is a Victorian love-letter to death and memorialisation. For centuries, London's burial grounds and churchyards had been bursting at the seams. Graveyards had become death-traps and the smells from some sites were unbearable and seen as a danger to public health. The ever-growing city needed a new and dignified solution to their soaring number of bodies, and so in 1839, Highgate Cemetery opened on the outskirts of London. Highgate was but one of several large cemeteries that were to open around the capital, offering large and upmarket burial spaces that were not attached to a church. Today, these cemeteries are called 'The Magnificent Seven' and are some of the most dramatic burial sites in the UK.

Highgate was so fashionable it expanded in 1856, adding an East cemetery. The East cemetery is more modern and open while still retaining a sense of Victorian grandeur. It houses the mortal remains of countless celebrities and people of note, including the poet Christina Rossetti, novelist George Eliot and, controversially, Karl Marx. His tomb, depicting an enormous likeness of his own head, has been subject to vandalism and bomb threats since its unveiling in 1956.

The West cemetery is a true temple of Victorian architectural excess. Paths take visitors past enormous mausoleums, life-size lions, dogs and huge angels before passing through the Egyptian Avenue and a ring of mausoleums called the Circle of Lebanon. Previously topped with a 280-year-old cedar tree, it was removed and replaced in 2019.

Superstitions surrounding Highgate's spooky roots exist to this day, aided by the Highgate Vampire controversies in the 1970s. Throughout the decade, a media storm surrounded the then-overgrown cemeteries where reports of supernatural activity, grave desecration and an ancient vampire were rife.

GLASGOW NECROPOLIS

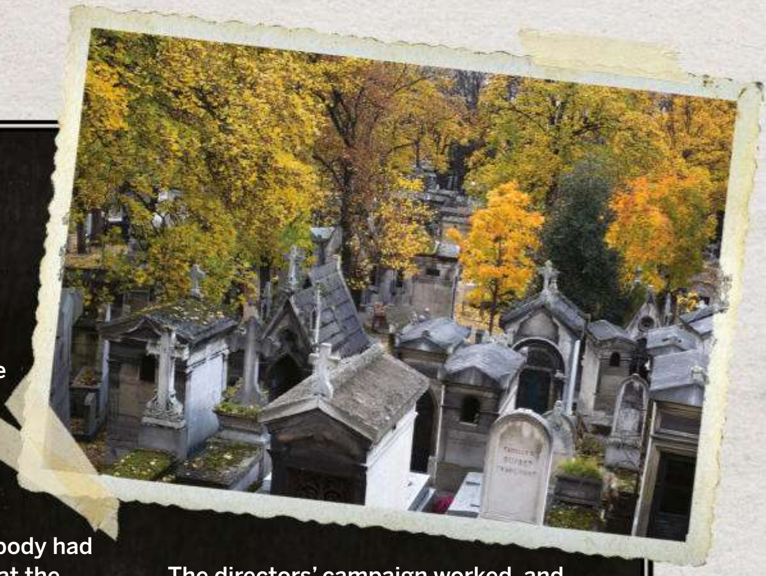
Location: Glasgow, Scotland, UK **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

Opening in 1833, Glasgow Necropolis is a real 'city of the dead' that looks over one of Scotland's largest cities. Following the 1832 British cemeteries act, businesses were able to open large private cemeteries that were not only non-religious, but for profit, and Glasgow was one of the first cities to announce its own. Glasgow Necropolis proved so popular that by 1851, all 37 acres of the land were full. With over 50,000 interments (not all with headstones), the cemetery has been closed to new burials for decades but was always intended as a welcoming place for visitors, and attracts many visitors to this day. The paths of this Victorian cemetery snake upwards, leading to – not a grave - but a huge statue of John Knox, the founder of Scottish Presbyterianism. Knox's statue pre-dates the cemetery, having been erected in 1825, but provided a clear focal point, around which the architects could plan the layout.

The main entrance to the Necropolis is a curious old structure. Outside the cemetery walls, a small river called the Molendinar Burn can be found, which needs to be crossed to enter the cemetery. This reminded many Victorian visitors of crossing the river Styx, being the boundary between this world and the next, and was a sure sign to show due respect to its silent inhabitants. The bridge was completed in 1836 and became the main path for funeral processions, where it gained the name "the Bridge of Sighs."

PÈRE LACHAISE

Location: Paris, France **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Euro



Opening in 1804, Père Lachaise was the world's first garden cemetery, and the first civic cemetery in Paris. While tourists clamour to visit its famous residents, the cemetery did not always enjoy such fame. Père Lachaise was founded by First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte, who decided that drastic measures were required to negate overcrowded city churchyards. In 1799 a competition was announced challenging the city planners to find a solution by designing a new cemetery. Ultimately, the winner was Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, who transformed the hilly area in the west of Paris into a beautiful maze.

The new concept attracted some burials, but many locals were unsure if they wanted their loved ones buried outside the city limits. However, the directors thought up a publicity campaign, boasting that they held the remains of celebrated French poet and playwright, Molière. Molière's body had been buried without a service at the King's request, then was disinterred by the revolutionary government in 1792, who stored him in a national museum. In 1817, his bones were removed and buried at Père Lachaise, but the provenance is uncertain.

The directors' campaign worked, and today, over one million people are buried at Père Lachaise cemetery. Visitors often visit Père Lachaise to pay homage to specific graves, as creative icons such as Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde and Frederic Chopin are all buried within its walls.

Oscar Wilde's enormous stone tomb is visited by thousands of adoring fans throughout the year. The Irish playwright died in 1900, penniless and in exile, and his elaborate tomb was constructed exclusively on the donations of friends and admirers. For decades, his grave was covered in messages of love, surrounded by an explosion of lipstick kisses, but in 2014 a protective glass barrier was installed.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

COLONIAL PARK AND BONAVENTURE CEMETERY

Location: Savannah, Georgia, USA **Time zone:** UTC-5 **Currency:** US dollar

Savannah is often cited as one of the USA's most haunted cities, and with such a reputation, it's no wonder that its cemeteries are bursting with spooks.

Colonial Park Cemetery is the oldest burial ground in the city, accepting its first permanent resident in 1750. The cemetery has countless interesting and thought-provoking gravestones, including Revolutionary War soldiers, victims of the Yellow Fever epidemic and historical figures such as Button Gwinnett – a signatory to the Declaration of Independence.

Some visitors have reported hearing strange voices, shadow people and the ghost of infamous murderer Rene Rondolier. Reportedly, he was convicted of murder and hung from a tree inside the cemetery ground. People claim to have seen him still hanging or even walking between the graves.

Bonaventure Cemetery was established in 1846 and is one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the country – its banks of magnolia and dogwood create a magical atmosphere – but it also has its fair share of spooky goings on! Reports of children's laughter, baby's cries and a snarling pack of wild dogs heard within the cemetery grounds.

The grave of 6-year-old Gracie Watson is particularly popular, with visitors often bringing her toys and coins, placing them beside a statue resembling the child. Some claim to have seen Gracie herself, wandering through the cemetery as though in life.

WESTMINSTER BURYING GROUND

Location: Baltimore, Maryland, USA **Time zone:** UTC-5 **Currency:** US dollar

Established in 1786, the Westminster Burying Ground is one of the oldest places on our list. Attached to a church, it is a graveyard or burial ground rather than a cemetery and contains a veritable 'who's who' of Baltimore history. There are countless heroes of the 1812 and Revolutionary War buried within Westminster, including General Sam Smith, James McHenry and James Buchanan. However, it seems to be the more mysterious burials that excite visitors.

Following writer Edgar Allan Poe's mysterious, sudden death in 1849, his burial could never be a simple affair. He was originally buried in an unmarked grave at the back of the grounds, and remained so for decades until, in 1875, local schoolchildren raised money for a memorial through a fundraising effort called "Pennies for Poe". The children were hugely successful in their project and a memorial to the late poet was built at the entrance of the grounds. His body was disinterred and re-buried beside his wife Virginia and his mother-in-law, Maria. Despite having a grand memorial, many locals believe that Poe is still restlessly wandering the graveyard, unsettled for eternity.

The Burying Ground is also home to the terrifying Screaming Skull of Cambridge. Reportedly the skull of an unknown murdered minister, it is said to be encased in cement with its jaw bound shut in an attempt to stifle its blood-curdling screams. According to legend, the skull would scream relentlessly and sounded so horrific in nature, that the sounds would torment the minds of those who heard them, sending them into madness.

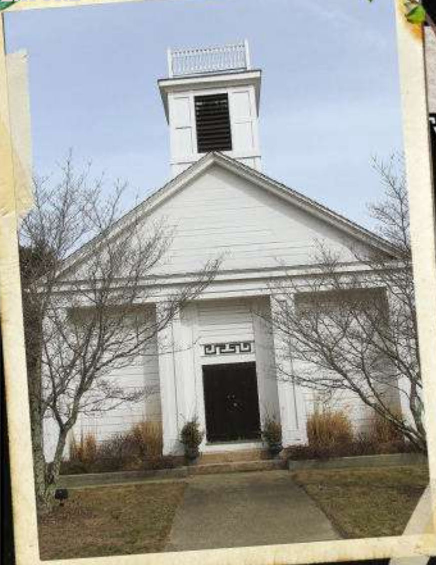
UNION CEMETERY, CONNECTICUT

Location: Easton, Connecticut, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

Founded in the early 1700s, Union Cemetery is a beautiful, historical burial ground, and is said to be home to countless ghosts and ghouls. This infamous site was once deemed 'evil' and 'demonic' by famous paranormal investigators and self-styled demonologists, Ed and Lorraine Warren. With over 350 years of history in its grounds, it's little surprise that stories of hauntings have taken hold.

The majority of haunting reports from the cemetery relate to the 'White Lady'. A lonely female spirit in a white gown or wedding dress, she is said to wander around the cemetery and onto the nearby road. She has caused motorists to swerve or crash their vehicles, believing that they'd hit a pedestrian, only for the lady to have completely disappeared when they left their car.

Other paranormal reports vary, but some of the most chilling are from a spirit, or demon, called "Red Eyes". Several visitors have reported a sensation of being watched, or feeling a stranger's hot breath against their neck. When they turn around, they're met with a pair of horrible, glowing red eyes, staring back at them from a distance.



CHESTNUT HILL CEMETERY

Location: Exeter, Rhode Island, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

This small unassuming 10-acre cemetary opened in 1838 and holds a mere 1000 interments. But what Chestnut Hill lacks in grandeur it makes up for with its terrifying tales of vampires.

In the late 1800s, with little public understanding of disease, many turned to folklore when tuberculosis wiped out entire families, leading to the New England vampire panic.

The Browns were one such family decimated by TB. After losing his wife and two daughters and his son Edwin becoming ill, patriarch George decided that something must be done to save Edwin from the "vampire's grasp". So he decided to dig up the bodies of his deceased family members.

When he opened their graves, his wife and eldest daughter's bodies were heavily decomposed, but his daughter Mercy was remarkably intact – a sure sign of her vampirism. According to New England belief, finding blood in the heart of the dead revealed them as a vampire and the only way to remove the curse was to cast their heart into a fire. Mercy's heart and liver were burned, the ashes retrieved and mixed into a drink to help the ailing Edwin, but to no avail. He died two months later.

Image source: Getty, Alamy

BACHELOR'S GROVE CEMETERY

Location: Cook County, Illinois, USA Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

Bachelor's Grove Cemetery officially opened in 1836, however its first burials were earlier when workers who died building the Illinois and Michigan Canal were interred there. The cemetery is tiny, holding around 200 graves, and closing towards the end of the 20th century, but it has gathered quite the scary reputation.

After the cemetery closed to new burials, it was left became overgrown. The image of a spooky overgrown cemetery was irresistible to some, and vandals, partying teenagers and grave-robbers gradually moved in. By the 1970s, unwelcome visitors were rife, and many of the remaining headstones were permanently destroyed. However, it wasn't the vandals that fired up a local media storm, but visitors with darker intent. Bachelor's Grove had become a hotbed for occult rituals of the most brutal kind. Local press reported that satanic cults would frequently gather at the cemetery and sacrifice animals in acts of black magic. The remains of animals and discarded ritualistic objects were frequently found by police at Bachelor's Grove, adding to the site's dark infamy. Rumours that the cemetery was used as a place for dumping bodies by several Chicago-based crime families, including Al Capone's, were also aired. Many had family members moved to more salubrious cemeteries at this time.

Unsurprisingly, there are many reported hauntings at Bachelor's grove. From twinkling lights and discs to women in white and dogs with glowing eyes. Strangest of all, an entire ghost farmhouse has been seen appearing in the middle of the cemetery, as though a portal to the past, or perhaps another world, had opened up.

CEMENTERIO DE LA RECOLETA

Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina Time zone: UTC-3 Currency: Argentine peso

Few boroughs can boast that their neighbours are some of the most important Argentinians ever to live, but the inhabitants of Recoleta Barrio in Buenos Aires can do just that. The cemetery is a densely-packed mini-city of bright white mausoleums and immaculate, tree-lined paths that sit in the shadows of high-rise living.

Much like the apartment blocks that surround it, many of the mausoleums are cramped affairs with generations of the same families sharing the above-ground tombs.

Many areas of the cemetery are as clean and clear as the day they were built, but others have succumbed to the hands of time and vandalism, where broken marble and glass open the graves to a huge community of stray cats, who have made the cemetery their home.

The cemetery is home to many famous Argentinians, including famous politician Eva Perón. Otherwise known by the nickname of Evita, she was First Lady of Argentina from 1946 until her death in 1952.

The cemetery's strangest grave is that of Rufina Cambacérès, who was buried alive. The 19-year-old was said to have died suddenly of a heart attack and was quickly placed in a coffin in her family's mausoleum. A few days later, a cemetery worker peered in to see the coffin damaged. He opened the lid, fearing grave robbers had broken in, but found something much worse; Rufina dead, with bruised hands and scratch marks on the lid. It's believed that she had entered a state of catalepsy and work up in her coffin, eventually dying of exhaustion.

THE CHASE FAMILY VAULT, CHRIST CHURCH CEMETERY

Location: Oistin, Barbados Time zone: UTC-4 Currency: Barbados dollar

Within the churchyard of the Christ Church Parish Church sit some of the most infamous coffins in the world. The Chase family vault is not known for its grand architecture or for the achievements of the people contained within, but for the fact that its coffins move.

According to legend, the Chase family purchased the grave site in 1724, following the death of 2-year-old Ann. Her body was placed in a lead-lined coffin and laid to rest in the vault. She was soon joined by other family members, including her sister Dorcas and a month later, their father, Thomas.

As the cemetery workers readied the vault for Thomas to join his daughters, they began to move the huge slab that covered the entrance and found that all was not as they had left it. The coffins that had been neatly stacked in the vault were now jumbled and resting against the walls at strange angles. The vault had been sealed, no-one had been inside, so how the coffins moved was a mystery. The coffins were re-set, with Thomas neatly added to the vault. A year later, another coffin was added and cemetery workers found the vault in the same state of disarray, with no signs of human interference. Again and again, this same process happened and, even after leaving a layer of sand to detect any intruder's footprints, the mystery persisted. Eventually, the Chase's wandering coffins were too much for the cemetery and they were reburied elsewhere. Today, the vault sits empty, but spooky stories of the moving coffins persist.

THE VOODOO-VIBED NECROPOLIS

From dark magic and vampires to slavery, plagues and hurricanes, there are endless reasons why New Orleans is considered America's most haunted city

Location: New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Time zone: UTC-5

Currency: US dollar

Tips: Visit in Spring for Mardi Gras and book a tour to Manchac Swamp (see p114 for more)

Like much of the US, New Orleans was built upon cursed land. Founded by French-Canadian Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienbille, nobody wanted to settle in the swamp land that had formerly been occupied by the native Chitimacha, so the French shipped off their criminals to the bayou. Things have only gotten darker over its 300 year history. From murder to sinister superstitions, there are numerous reasons why it is one of the most haunted cities in the US. In fact, landlords often advertise their properties as either 'haunted' or 'not haunted' so that potential tenants know what they are in for. Without straying too far from the city's famous French Quarter, you can explore some of its spookiest spots and learn all about this bubbling cauldron of culture and superstition.

Put Some Spice in Your Life
Voodoo

NEW ORLEANS VOODOO

French Quarter

Louisiana voodoo is a fusion of many different belief systems including Roman Catholicism and Haitian Vodou. Initially praticised in secret, it grew considerably in popularity during the 19th century with New Orleans-based practitioners such as Marie Laveau and Doctor John. Although the practise saw a decline during the 20th century, tourism encouraged a revival and you will see numerous stores devoted to witchcraft and magic, including Reverend Zombie's House Of Voodoo, Marie Laveau's House Of Voodoo, Intuition and Esoterica Occult Goods among others, where you can enjoy a Creole bone reading, grab an authentic voodoo doll, some Marie Laveau merch and more.

To discover more about this oft-misunderstood religion, the New Orleans Historic Voodoo Museum, on Dumaine street is an entertaining yet informative exploration of voodoo. Don't expect a professional gallery though – its artefacts and objects are rather cluttered, requiring close inspection to decipher their significance. The museum also offers walking tours to the nearby Saint Louis Cemetery Number One, psychic readings, voodoo rituals and ceremonies.

Reverend Zombies House of VooDoo
Come On In And Shop For A Spell

BOURBON ORLEANS HOTEL

717 Orleans Sreet

The Bourbon is one of the city's most haunted hotels (and there are quite a few!). Situated in the heart of the French Quarter, the hotel is haunted by the ghosts of child victims of the 19th century yellow fever pandemic, a confederate soldier and the dancing phantom of a woman. Dare to stay in the Bourbon's most haunted suite, Room 644, and you might find yourself awoken by a ghostly nun or, even more sinisterly, anguished screams.

BOURBON ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS PHARMACY MUSEUM

514 Chartres Street

The 19th Century former apothecary looks as it would have done 200 years ago, packed with voodoo potions, weird medicines and superstitious cures. There's also the spirit of the pharmacy's former Victorian owner, Dr. Joseph Dupas, who is said to haunt the premises after closing time. Supposedly, he used to practise voodoo and perform horrific experiments on pregnant black slave women, so make sure you swing by while the museum is open.

DID YOU KNOW?

Superstition is strong in New Orleans. You might notice doorknobs and locks installed upside down on many doors across the city. This isn't a botched job, it's intentional in an attempt to confuse the spirits of the recently deceased or pesky vampires attempting to enter homes.

SAINT LOUIS CEMETERY NUMBER ONE

425 Basin Street

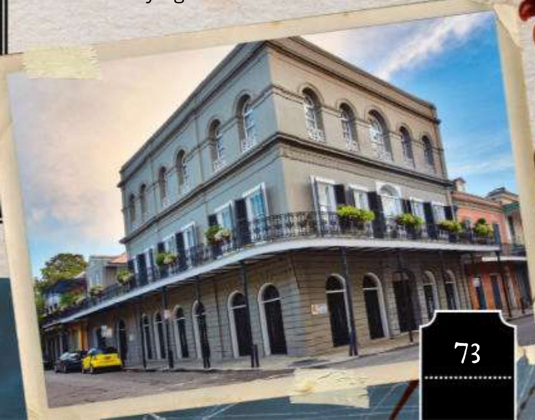
With New Orleans' sitting at or below sea level, the water table of the soil is extremely high – meaning the dead can't be buried traditionally six feet under, for risk of the coffin or casket winding up water-logged, or worse, being displaced from the ground and popping up to the surface. Instead, NOLA's deceased occupy above ground tombs that look like stone houses and are laid out in regular rows that resemble streets, and so the city's historic cemeteries are referred to as 'Cities of the Dead'.

Perhaps the most infamous of New Orleans cemeteries is Saint Louis Cemetery Number One, the oldest and most haunted burial ground in the city. Built in 1789, St. Louis is the permanent resting place of the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, Marie Laveau – her grave adorned with various offerings and decorated in small Xs graffitted by those visitors who have attempted to invoke the spirit of the infamous witch for assistance. Many believe her very spirit can be seen on St John's Eve, identifiable by the knotted red hankerchief she wore around her neck. But fear not, Laveaux wasn't an evil woman, rather the opposite – her folk magic brought spiritual and physical healing to many.

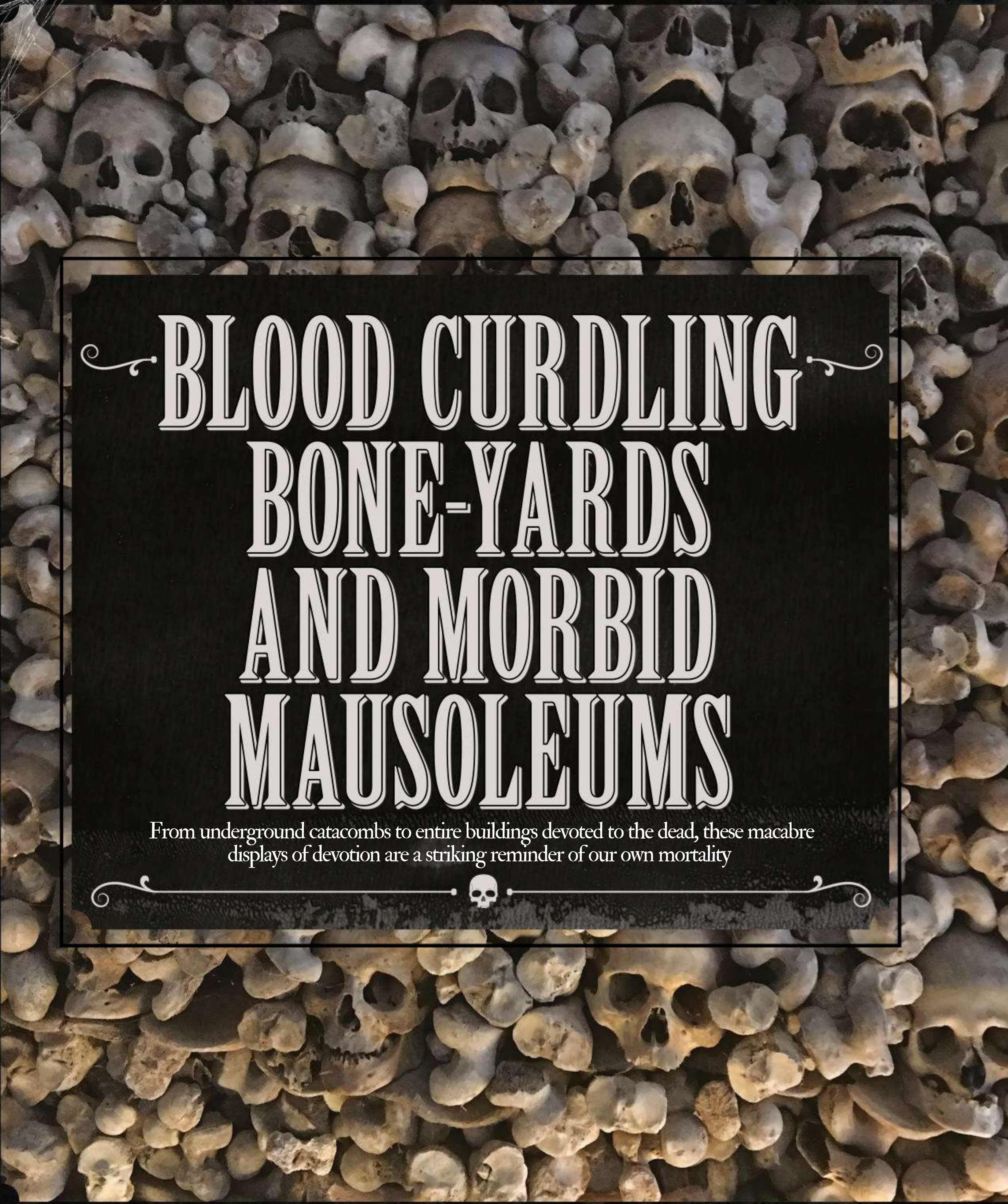
LALAURIE MANSION

1138 Royal Street

Delphine LaLaurie is perhaps New Orlean's most notoriously evil former resident. In 1834, a fire at her lodgings revealed her true nature to the city. Legend has it that they discovered a black woman chained up in her kitchen, who revealed that she had started the fire in an attempt to escape. In LaLaurie's attic was a torture chamber designed to inflict atrocities on her slaves – seven of whom were discovered tied up with spiked chain collars. While authorities were aware of LaLaurie's sadistic nature and torment of slaves, previous fines did not deter her, and it wasn't until the fire that the rumours spread that she was a torturer, sadist and murderer. A mop congregated at her home and she fled, never truly paying for her crimes. Her high-class reputation was destroyed but her lurid legend has lived on. Today, the house is supposedly haunted by those who suffered at LaLaurie's hands, and while you can't go inside, you can hear her tale on one of the city's ghost tours.

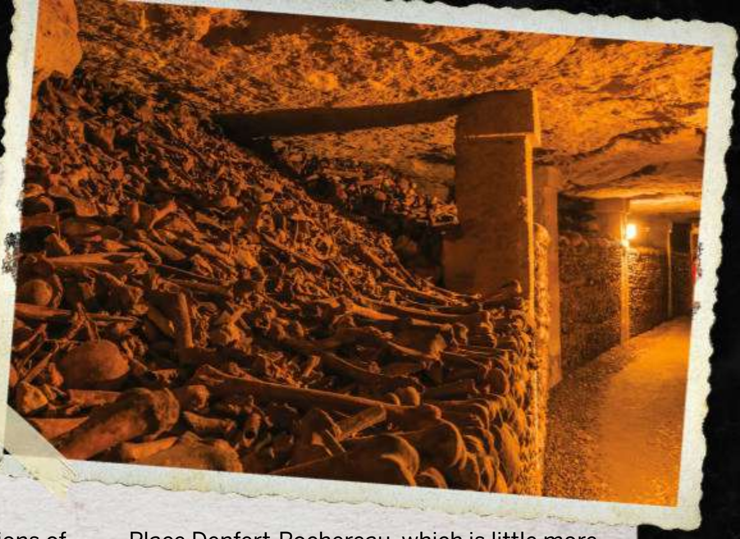


Images © Getty; Alamy



BLOOD CURDLING BONE-YARDS AND MORBID MAUSOLEUMS

From underground catacombs to entire buildings devoted to the dead, these macabre displays of devotion are a striking reminder of our own mortality



LES CATACOMBES DE PARIS

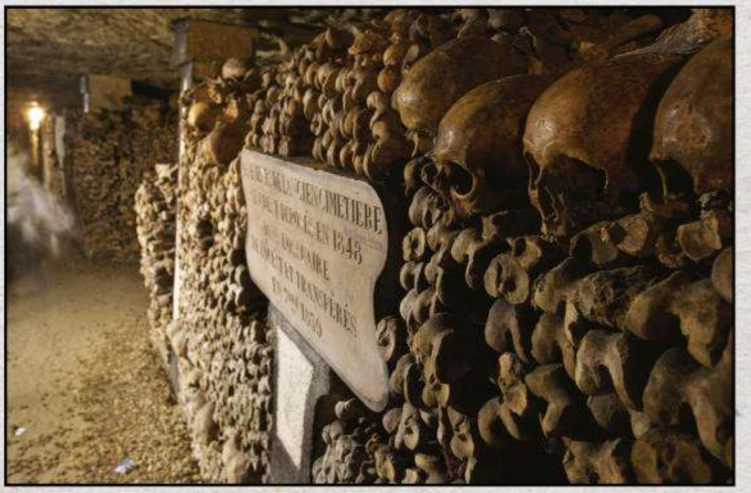
Location: Paris, France **Time zone:** UTC +1 **Currency:** Euro

You'd expect a lot of interesting things 20 metres beneath the streets of a city centre with as much history as Paris, but perhaps not the bones of six million people. This enormous ossuary was created when Parisian cemeteries, following centuries' worth of deaths – including thousands of victims of the plague that had wiped out nearly half of the city's population in 1466 – began to burst at the seams. The pivotal moment came when Les Innocents spilled its grim occupants into the basement of a popular restaurant in 1780. The authorities quickly closed five of the city's cemeteries and decided to empty them into the long-abandoned tunnels of Paris's 12th-century limestone mines.

Cue two years of macabre night-time processions in which millions of (mostly skeletal) dead were carted under black sackcloth down the main drag to the catacombs entrance. Today, following extensive renovation, there are up to 200 miles of bone galleries, split into several networks, some of which are open to the public. The simplest way to access the catacombs is via the public entrance at Place Denfert-Rochereau, which is little more than a glorified green shed. The catacombs themselves are a surreal experience, with neat rows of skulls and limbs symmetrically arranged along winding passages dotted with ghoulish alcoves. Of course, the whole construction raises some astounding moral questions: did the architects actually stop to consider the ethics of building a shrine out of human bone? Whatever the case, it's an awe-inspiring place.

Some tips for visitors: book timed entrance tickets well in advance or prepare to queue for a couple of hours, as the lines can easily go 200-deep. Also, bring a warm jacket (the temperature is 14 degrees Celsius) and stick to the delineated route. One gloomy, bone-lined passageway looks much the same as the next after a while, and by straying down one of the cordoned-off tunnels it would be easy to get lost.

In fact, two teenage boys did just that in 2017: they went missing in the tunnels for three days, having ventured into cordoned-off areas. When the rescue party found them they were suffering from hypothermia but otherwise unharmed.



Above: Them bones, them bones: the Catacombes contain several centuries' worth of remains

Left: Plaques like this one denote the rough era of interment of each period, but sadly details are sparse

Below: Sedlec's skeleton chandelier and other key pieces were transformed by Rint into a UNESCO-protected celebration of mortality and life

THE SEDLEC OSSUARY

Location: Kutna Hora, Czechia **Time zone:** UTC +1 **Currency:** Czech koruna

There is a place where the living and the dead meet, where human remains and architecture collide in order to create one of the most breathtaking sights that the unsuspecting traveller might ever stumble upon.

The Sedlec Ossuary – or Church of Bones – is located beneath the Cemetery Church of All Saints, an unassuming medieval chapel in the Czech Republic city of Kutna Hora. Step inside, however, and you will be transported to another world, one where more than 60,000 human skeletons have been painstakingly picked apart and refashioned into an ornate Gothic interior.

The bones form coats of arms, laurel wreathes and vast, sweeping archways that have come a long way since the 15th century, when they were dug out of mass graves during the construction of the chapel. Sprinkled with soil from Golgotha, this was believed to be a blessed place to be buried and people came from across the country to lay their dead to rest at Sedlec.

For centuries, the excavated bones lay in neglected piles until, in 1870, František Rint came to Sedlec. Rint was a woodcarver with an eye for the unusual. He took the skeletons and fashioned them into one of the most macabre and awe-inspiring ecclesiastical interiors in the world.

The centrepiece of this UNESCO World Heritage Site is the chandelier, made up of every bone in the human body, while elsewhere, Rint left his signature on the wall, spelled out by the bones of the dead.

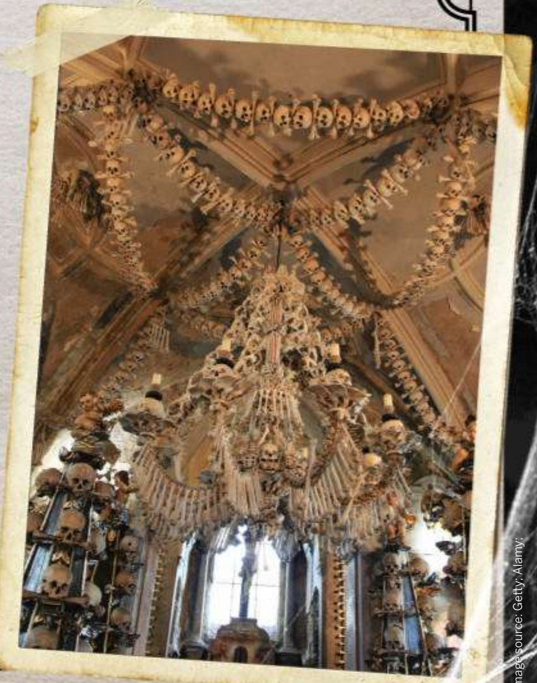
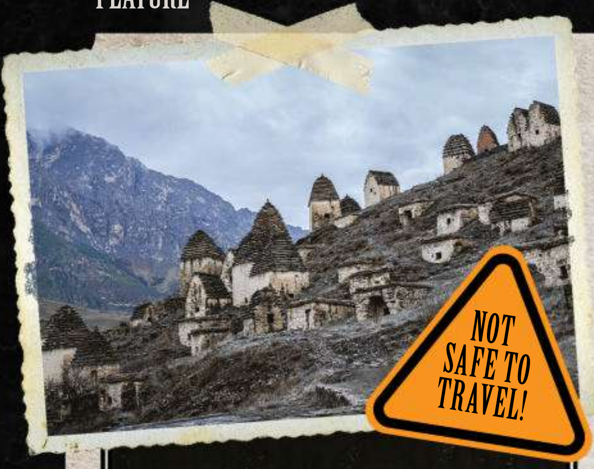


Image source: Getty, Alamy



DARGAVS VILLAGE

Location: North Ossetia-Alania, Russia
Time zone: UTC+4
Currency: Russian ruble

This village is known as the 'city of the dead' – a necropolis of Northern Russia where 99 house-like tombs serve as the resting place for hundreds of people.

Dargavs is a mysterious place, accessible only by a long and perilous journey along treacherous mountain roads. At the end of the road lies what appears to be a medieval settlement, yet this is a settlement that is home to no living soul. Within these buildings, some numbering as high as four storeys, archaeologists have found the remains of bodies dating back to at least the 16th century.

Nobody knows the story behind Dargavs, yet local legend claims that this Ossetian site was once built to house victims of a devastating plague. Those who died in the houses were simply left there and, over the centuries, new bodies were laid beside them. Mysteriously, some of the remains have been found laid out in wooden boats, perhaps to ferry them into the after life, while the wells dotted through the site allowed grieving families to discover the fate of their loved one. If a coin dropped into the well can be heard to strike a stone at the bottom, it was taken as a sign that the dead person's soul had safely reached heaven.

This sombre, isolated spot has understandably become a place that is now rich in legends, with locals warning that anyone who enters the cemetery alive will never leave. It may well be a chance worth taking, because this city of the dead is a place unlike any other on earth.

CATACOMBE DI ROMA

Location: Rome, Italy **Time zone:** UTC +1 **Currency:** Euro

The Romans, it seems, bought into the idea of placing the city's dead in vast burial grounds beneath the streets long before the Parisians. As far back as the 2nd century CE, the bodies of pagans, Jews and early Christians were taken to bespoke caverns excavated underneath Rome. Early Christians preferred burial to the pagan custom of burning but, as Christianity was forbidden by Roman law, they had to place their dead in secret vaults outside the city walls. When Christian persecution finally ended in the 4th century, Roman Christians continued to use catacombs under the city, right up until the 5th century.

There are around 60, many only discovered in the last few decades. Five are open to the public: the Catacombs of San Sebastiano, San Callisto, Priscilla, Domitilla and Sant'Agnese, with a combined length of more than 30 miles, containing the remains of thousands of ancient Roman citizens. Individual niches often have inscriptions, still visible and carved into the stone, and some larger mausoleums have entire families interred. San Callisto is host to Cripta Dei Papi – the Crypt of the Popes – a grander series of graves of holy men. The Catacombs of Priscilla on Via Salaria contains significant Christian frescoes and is a good catacomb to explore first. Ancient artwork lines many catacomb tunnels and the final resting places of more affluent citizens can be particularly elaborate – so much so, it's strange to speak of the Roman and the very aesthetically different Parisian catacombs.

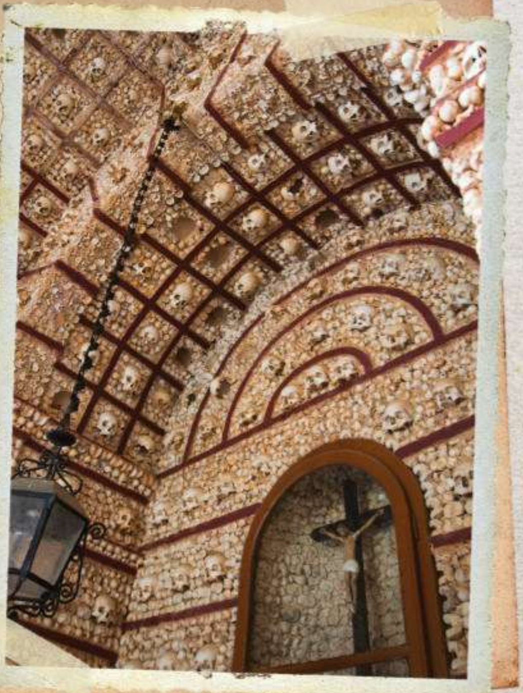
Left: Rome's Catacombes double as a time capsule for art and everyday life, giving an insight into the varying wealth levels of citizens of the city

Below: Evora's Chapel of Bones is another example of an ossuary whose religious purpose was to demonstrate to its surrounding citizens on how to reflect on their lives and relationship with the afterlife

CAPELA DOS OSSOS

Location: Évora, Portugal
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Euro

The Portuguese "Chapel of Bones" was built by Franciscan monks and is located next door to the Church of St. Francis. Its walls are decorated with the bones of over 5000 corpses, many of whom were ordinary people previously laid to rest in Évora's medieval cemeteries, and are arranged in a variety of patterns. The chapel is a monument to the certitude of death and a place where reflection on your own existence is encouraged – a poem conveying this is mounted upon the wall and the roof of the chapel reads: "Melior est die mortis die nativitatis (Better is the day of death than the day of birth)" (Ecclesiastes, 7:1).



THE CAPUCHIN CATACOMBS OF PALERMO

Location: Sicily, Italy Time zone: UTC +1 Currency: Euro

When the Capuchin monks discovered that their small charnel pit beneath the altar of St Anne at church of Santa Maria della Pace was full, they decided to dig into the naturally occurring caves beneath the main altar and create a larger resting place for their fallen comrades. Legend has it that when they went to move their brothers, they discovered them naturally mummified. Believing it to be an act of God, they placed them on display in the new catacombs for all to see. As news spread of this "miracle", crowds of visitors were drawn to the cemetery to witness the ghastly spectacle. However, science says otherwise: the bodies were dehydrated on racks of ceramic pipes within the catacombs and often later preserved with vinegar; others were embalmed and sealed in glass cabinets. Initially it was only monks who were laid to rest here, but by the 17th century, rich citizens began paying to be buried in the catacombs. The last people to have been entombed in the catacombs were in the 1920s and 30s and included the corpse of Rosalia Lombardo, who died one week prior to her second birthday of pneumonia caused by Spanish flu. She was embalmed by Alfredo Salafia and is often dubbed 'Sleeping Beauty' as she is so well preserved she appears to be caught in a perpetual slumber.

CIMITERO DELLE FONTANELLE

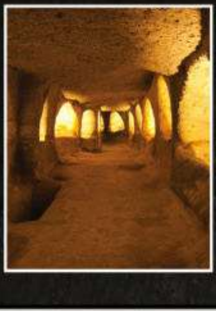
Location: Naples, Italy
Time zone: UTC +0
Currency: Euro

The Fontanelle cemetery dates back to the early 16th century, when undertakers began moving bodies to a nearby cave to make room for newer corpses in local churchyards. During the great plague of 1656, thousands of anonymous bodies were committed to the caves. In the 17th century, a flood caused the skeletal remains to be washed into the streets, presenting a macabre procession. The bones were later returned to the cave, but it wasn't until 1872 that the corpses were catalogued, stored in boxes and on wooden racks. This spurred a cult of devotion to the unnamed dead, members claiming that the names of the dead would be revealed to them in dreams, and devoted time to caring for their skulls. A small church was built at the entrance to the cemetery in response. The church was closed in 1969, but it is now open to the public again after a restoration.

CATACOMBS OF MILOS

Location: Cyclades, Greece Time zone: UTC +2
Currency: Euro

For a more exotic location, these catacombs are found on the Greek island of Milos, part of the Cyclades island group. This is an ancient site, carved out of porous volcanic rock into large and impressive halls. Originally serving as burial chambers, the catacombs are now used by the locals as storerooms or a cool and convenient place to keep animals.



ODESSA CATACOMBS

NOT SAFE TO TRAVEL!

Location: Odessa, Ukraine Time zone: UTC +2
Currency: Ukrainian hryvnia

A vast system of caves exists beneath this Black Sea city, running some 1,550 miles and connecting many subterranean sites. This began as a series of limestone mines in the 19th century, but they were later connected by smugglers into the labyrinth that it is today. It has not been fully mapped, and only a tiny fraction of the site is open to the public.

SAINT FRANCIS MONASTERY

Location: Lima, Peru Time zone: UTC -5
Currency: Peruvian sol

Under the Basilica y Convento de San Francisco in Lima are crypts with an ossuary containing thousands of skeletons, laid out in macabre mandala and geometric patterns along the walls and set into the floor. It's estimated that 25,000 bodies were laid to rest in the catacombs and they date back hundreds of years, though they were only discovered in 1943.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

COLD SPOTS

THE SPECTRES OF OLD SMOKY

With 1,000 years of history, Scotland's capital has seen its share of macabre and mysterious, leading to it being called one of the most haunted cities in Britain

Location: Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

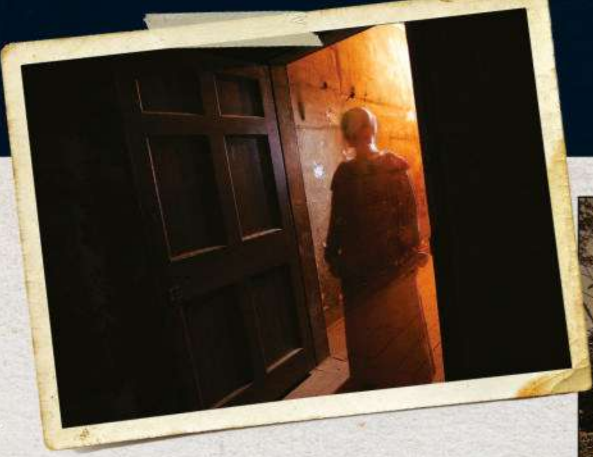
Time zone: UTC+0

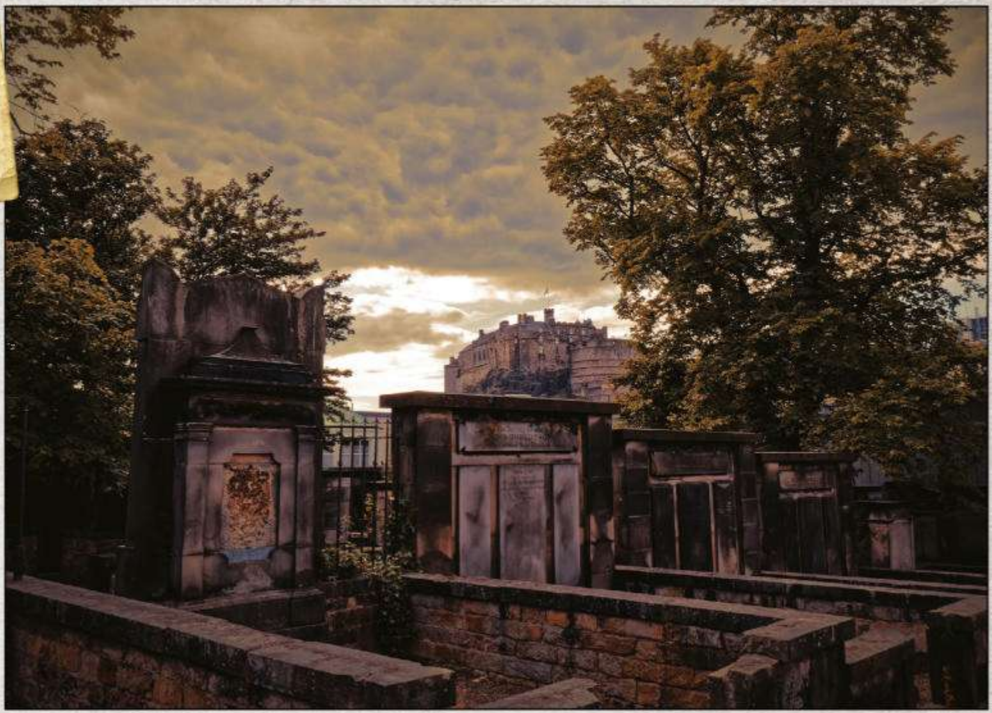
Currency: Pound sterling

Tips: Book yourself on one of the city's many ghost tours, and why not day trip to Loch Ness? (p115)

Edinburgh has a rich history full of scandal, crime, and more importantly to us, hauntings. Its dimly lit, narrow streets and gothic architecture is home to many ghost stories, and these historic haunted spots are all worth exploring. The South Bridge Vaults, sometimes called the Edinburgh Vaults, were originally built in 1785 to be used as storage space for merchants and to house workshops for cobblers as well as taverns. These were poorly constructed, however; leaks were common and this caused the vaults to deteriorate quickly after they opened so the businesses abandoned them around the 1820s. The living conditions inside were poor as flooding was common and visibility was low. This left the space unoccupied and as such, crime began to rise in the vaults. A series of tunnels underneath the city made it ideal for hiding certain activities. The homeless population began using it for shelter, gangs distilled whiskey, and brothels began operating in the space. Bodies would be dumped in the vaults and bodysnatchers were known for roaming the tunnels. During the Great Fire of Edinburgh in 1824 smoke made its way through the ventilation shafts of the vaults and suffocated those inside that had hoped it would be shelter from the fire. Those that didn't die from the smoke were cooked in the intense heat. It's also believed that notorious bodysnatchers Burke and Hare roamed the vaults looking for victims, however no evidence has been found to support these claims.

Under the bustling streets of Edinburgh's Old Town lies Mary King's Close. What was





once a hub of trade in the city is now buried under the Royal Exchange. The street being closed off for so long led to many rumours and urban legends being created around it. Countless stories of it being haunted have been reported for hundreds of years. The nearby lock was used for dumping waste. Visions of ghosts, the haunting lights coming from the nearby lock and the outbreak of plagues in the area didn't help its reputation.

To the south of Mary King's Close, in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, is Greyfriars Kirkyard. Established in the late 16th century, the graveyard is said to be one of the most haunted spots in the city. Many notable residents of Edinburgh were buried here over the years and with the city's dark history it isn't surprising that the residents that once walked its paths in those times would still be around watching over them today. Spend some time taking in the stunning gravestones throughout the site such as the one for surgeon John Borthwick or George Foulis. The Mausoleum of Sir George Mackenzie, Lord Advocate of Scottish Government stands out for its imposing stature and presence. Mackenzie was involved in witch trials during the 1600s as well as the persecution of Presbyterian Covenanters. Around 1,200 Covenanters were imprisoned and kept in fields near to where the Greyfriars Kirkyard stands today. Hundreds of the Covenanters died while imprisoned, leading to the Lord Advocate earning the nickname of 'Bloody' Mackenzie. It wouldn't be surprising if those who passed away under the mistreatment of the Lord Advocate would wander the graveyard today, disturbing the mausoleum of Mackenzie and ensuring he wasn't resting peacefully.

> "WITH ITS DARK HISTORY IT ISN'T SURPRISING THAT THE RESIDENTS THAT ONCE WALKED ITS PATHS WOULD STILL BE WATCHING OVER IT TODAY"

EDINBURGH CASTLE

Castlehill

Set foot in the grounds of Edinburgh Castle and you might hear the soft whistle of pipes, seemingly playing from right beneath your feet. This tune is apparently the haunting memory of the Lone Piper, who disappeared on an errand hundreds of years ago. Upon discovering secret tunnels under the castle, a young boy was sent to investigate. Instructed to play his pipes continually, the piper stepped in, his pipes a sign of his progress. When his music suddenly stopped, a search party was sent in – but there was no sign of the boy.

Just one of the many ghosts to haunt Edinburgh Castle, it is no wonder the area is considered to be so haunted. The site where Edinburgh Castle stands was inhabited long before the chapel dedicated to Saint Margaret was built in the 12th century. As long ago as 850 BCE, the area has been home to settlements, with a defensive fortress standing during the Iron Age. The castle that now stands features buildings constructed between the 12th and 18th century, but while it started life as a royal residence, it was later turned into a prison and an army garrison. Its dungeons, however, led the castle to notoriety. Here, prisoners were kept tucked away and often forgotten. These forgotten prisoners often appear to visitors in the form of cold spots, shadows and unexplained moving objects.

Another common spectre is the headless drummer boy, who appears when the castle is facing danger – the first reporting of the boy was in 1650, before Cromwell attacked. The castle is also allegedly haunted by dogs, whose phantom forms roam the dog cemetery. An investigation launched by Dr Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire in 2001 confirmed that there were some peculiar goings-on at Edinburgh Castle. Over the course of ten days, 240 volunteers with no knowledge of the castle's paranormal history were sent into both reputedly haunted and areas of the castle where no paranormal activity had been reported with equipment to detect or record evidence of their experiences. The results were incredible – apparitions were spotted, and some sceptics reported that there was some kind of physical contact in the vaults and tunnels. Dr Wiseman, who had previously claimed that he didn't "believe" in ghosts, explained ambiguously, "I'm closer to being a lot more curious."

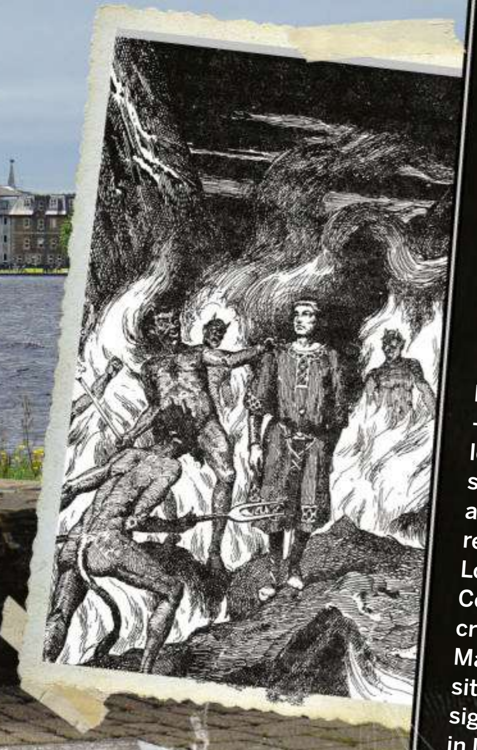
Images source: Getty; Alamy;

UNHALLOWED GROUND

You might think consecrated earth would prevent restless spirits from congregating, but think again. These houses of the holy are also regular stomping grounds of the dead, and sometimes even something demonic…

Written by Alice Pattillo

Image source: Getty; Alamy;



ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY

Location: County Donegal, Northern Ireland, UK
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

Pilgriming Catholics have been visiting this site on Station Island since the middle ages. According to legend, this holy spot was where Christ showed St Patrick a cave leading to purgatory. Yes, this site is essentially a gateway to hell. The site was so important in Medieval times that it's the only Irish place mentioned on Martin Behaim's world map of 1492, and it can be seen on maps dating back to the fifth century. The body of water in which it is situated – Lough Derg (Red Lake)– is also the legendary home of a giant serpent, said to have been killed by St Patrick and whose blood stained the lake red. Previously, the loch was named Lough Fin, in honor of the mythical Celtic warrior (and the supposed creator of the monstrous serpent). Many locals believe that this was the site of the Druids in Ireland, hence its significance and prevailing relevance in legend. Whatever the reality, there is something lurking in Lough Derg that defies all logic.

ROSSLYN CHAPEL

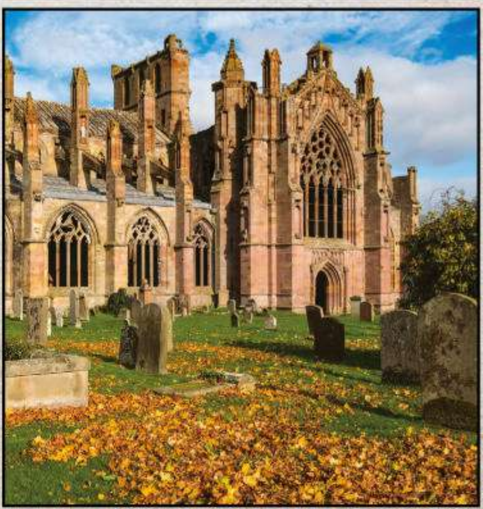
Location: Midlothian, Scotland, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

This stone chapel dates back to the 15th century, and was featured prominently in the 2003 novel and subsequent 2006 film *The Da Vinci Code*. Initially built as a private chapel in 1446 by the last Earl of Orkney, Sir William St Clair, he commissioned numerous stone masons to construct it with various imported materials from far and wide. Unfortunately, Sir William died before his vision was finished and he was laid to rest within its walls. The chapel is full of strange carvings, often described as a 'Tapestry in Stone'. One pillar in particular, The Apprentice Pillar, is said to have been carved by an apprentice stonemason whose talent superseded that of his master, causing his master to murder him in a fit of jealousy. The meanings behind many of the carvings appear to be Masonic, which is unsurprising as it is likely that Sir William was indeed involved in or at least inspired by the Order of the Knights Templar, despite the fact that they were officially disbanded in 1312. Today, the chapel is said to be home to numerous ghosts, including that of the alleged murdered apprentice, a ghostly dog, numerous monks and even knights.

MELROSE ABBEY

Location: Roxburghshire, Scotland, UK Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: Pound sterling

Once a wealthy and prosperous monastery, Melrose Abbey is home to one of the creepiest vampire legends, certainly in Scotland. In 1139, there was a chaplain to one of the ladies who lived nearby. This chaplain was known to revel in a wide array of sins and vices, even earning himself the nickname 'Hunderprest', meaning 'dog priest'. He was given this title apparently due to his fondness for hunting with a pack of wild hounds. It is believed that when the priest died, he paid for his sinful life by being cursed to return as a revenant, or vampire. There were sightings of the priest stalking the streets, searching for blood and terrifying the locals. It was said he would return to the abbey in the dead of night in the form of a bat. The monks at the abbey were reportedly able to drive the vampire away with prayers and rituals; however, this simply drove the priest into the house of his old mistress, who he bothered for sex. Terrified, she called upon the help of the monks, hoping an exorcism would help.

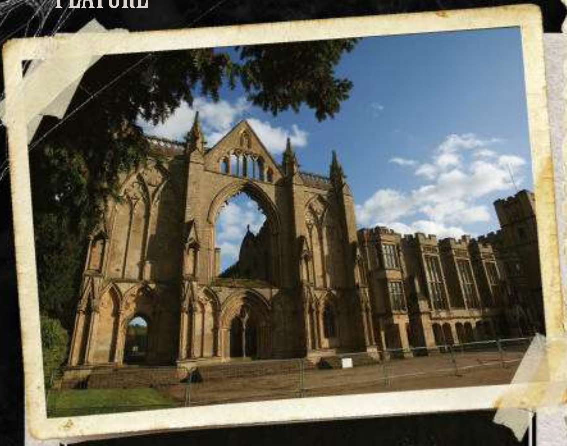


In order to finally rid themselves of this sinful demon once and for all, an elder monk travelled to the priest's grave where he reportedly witnessed the man rise out of the ground and approach him. The monk fought him off with a staff, and drove the phantom back into the ground. Now confident he was dealing with a vampire, the monk and some companions opened up the grave the following morning. Inside they found the priest's body, a smile upon his lips, dripping with blood. The monks removed the body, burned it to ashes, and scattered the ashes into the wind. The monks were satisfied that the demon was dealt with and things began to calm down. However, today it is said that on some nights ghostly howls can still be heard throughout the ruins of the abbey.

BUCKFASTLEIGH CHURCHYARD

Location: Devon, England, UK
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

The skeletal remains of Buckfastleigh church perch on a rock opposite Buckfast Abbey (itself haunted by a procession of phantom monks) and have attracted a congregation of corvids and a midnight mass of owls since a fire, supposedly started by Satanists, decimated the interior and ancient Norman front back in 1992. The church's history is chequered with disasters from fires to lightning strikes, bombs and body snatchers. If that's not ominous enough, its long forgotten churchyard is home to England's oldest mausoleum: Richard Cabell's sepulchre, a tomb harbouring the remains of an evil 17th century squire who's infamy inspired the Sherlock Holmes tale *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Cabell was said to have murdered his wife and sold his soul to the devil. His death in 1677 was predicted by a pack of hellhounds, who arose from the depths of Dartmoor to escort his soul to hell. Convinced that they would never be safe from him, the Buckfast locals constructed a solid tomb and secured his coffin beneath a solid block of heavy stone to trap him for eternity. Despite this, his spirit is said to haunt the graveyard along with the hellish hounds. Today, you'd be forgiven for mistaking the sepulchre's pyramid shaped porch for a closed down cafe kiosk – but most kiosks don't harbour a devil that bites your fingers if you circle them seven times and stick your hands through their iron bars…



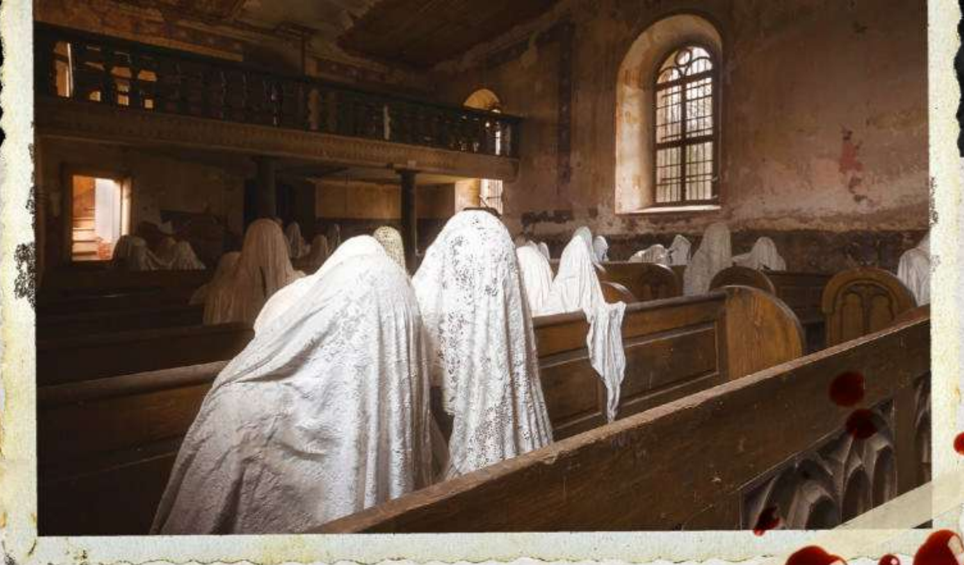
NEWSTEAD ABBEY

Location: Nottinghamshire, England, UK
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

Lord Byron's old haunt is home to a few phantoms, one of which he reportedly witnessed for himself. Known as the Black Friar, but dubbed by Byron as the Goblin Friar, this black, shapeless mass was said to roll off the bed, onto the floor and vanish. Byron claimed it would appear to his family members as an indication of an unfortunate event.

When Byron tired of life at the Abbey, he sold it to his childhood friend, Thomas Wildman. Wildman heard that a local deaf and mute girl named Sophie Hyatt was a huge fan of the poet, and invited her to visit Newstead as often as she wished. Sophie found a haven at the Abbey, caring for a dog Byron had left behind and becoming a familiar sight dressed in a white gown. Sophie had relied on a rich relative for her income and, after he died, set off for Nottingham, leaving a note to tell the Wildmans of her plans. When they read it, the family decided to ask Sophie to live with them at Newstead and sent a servant to bring her home. Tragically, he arrived to find that Sophie had been hit by a drayman's cart and killed instantly. But Sophie's spirit lives on at Newstead, strolling through her beloved garden where she now has her own pathway – White Lady's Walk.

The final ghostly figure at the Abbey is an ancestor of Byron's, witnessed by Sleepy Hollow author Washington Irving. He claimed the terrifying bearded figure emerged from a painting above the drawing room fireplace at night.



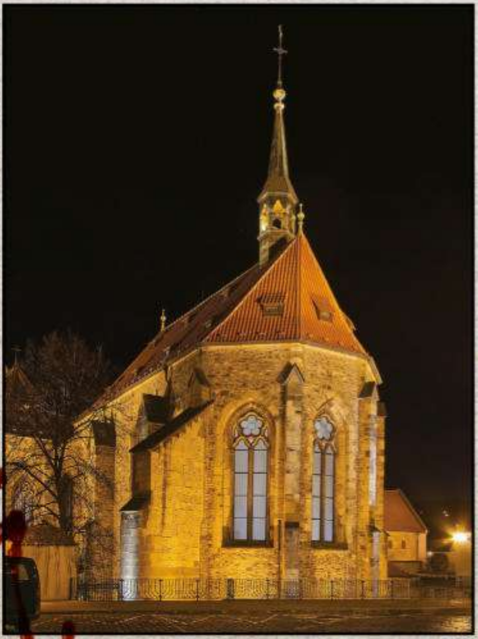
ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Location: Lukova, Czechia **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Czech koruna

In 1968, after serving the small community of Lukova – around 600km east of Prague – for over 600 years, the roof of St George's Church collapsed during a funeral service. For the superstitious locals, this was the last straw. The church had been plagued by misfortune for years, being rebuilt time after time. For the local parishioners, enough was enough and they began to hold mass outside, convinced the place was haunted, or even cursed. The church was soon boarded up, later raided by thieves struggling to survive under Soviet rule. Left in ruins, in 2014 it peaked the interest of art student Jakub Hadrava, who had been tasked by his University to find an abandoned, dilapidated church for an art project. Hadrava, who was studying sculpture, chose to give the haunted former house of the holy an afterlife, installing 30 plaster ghosts within the chapel's pews and aisles. Although the installation was initially only supposed to last for half a year, news spread and the ghosts now live here permanently, with donations making it possible for local authorities to begin the repair of the building.

CONVENT OF ST AGNES

Location: Prague, Czechia **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Czech koruna



This haunted nunnery is home to the ghost of a – you guessed it – nun. According to lore, in life, the daughter of a wealthy nobleman fell in love with a poor knight who was of a much lower social status than her. Her father refused the match, and instead sent her away to St Agnes to devote her life to God as punishment for her sinful love affair. The night before she left for the convent she conspired to leave with her love, but instead was met by her enraged father who murdered her for her disobedience and the shame she supposedly brought upon her family. Of course, this technically means she isn't a nun at all... In any case, the poor woman haunts St Agnes' – a terrifying sight, dripping with blood and often in an understandably miserable state. However, she is also known to smile creepily before vanishing and even saved the life of a suicidal girl once – grabbing the poison from her grasp and replacing it with gold coins.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

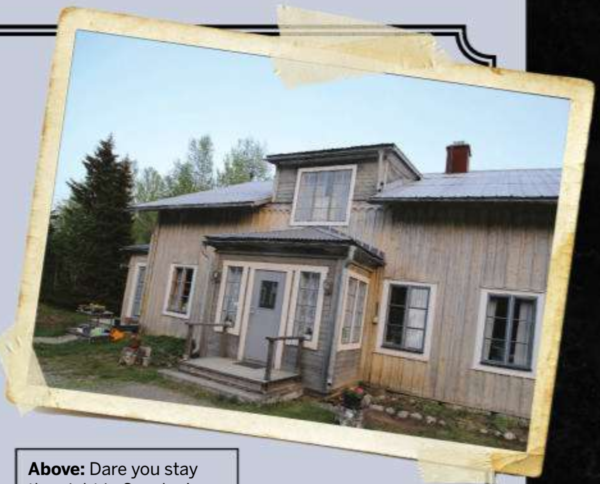
BORGVATTNET VICARAGE

Location: Borgvattnet, Sweden **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Swedish krona

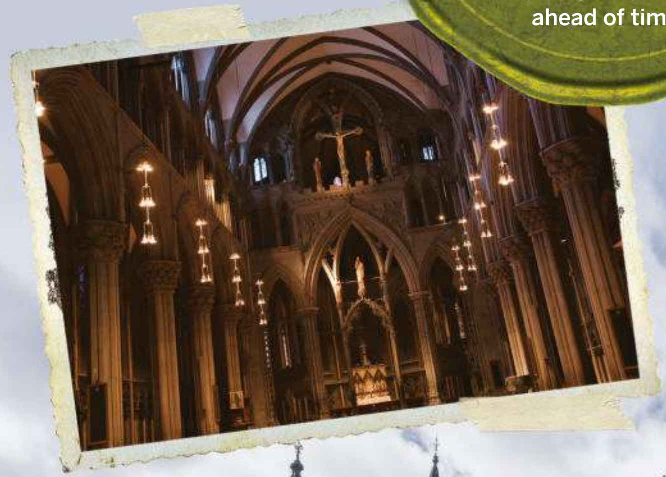
Borgvattnet Vicarage may not be very old, but it is infamously one of Sweden's most haunted places. Built in 1876 it was a mere fifty years into its existence that the first paranormal sightings were reported. In 1927 the resident vicar reported numerous supernatural events, including his washing being inexplicably taken off the line. Since then almost every new vicar or their family and friends have reported ghostly goings on, from poltergeist activity to screaming and shadow people sightings. In the early '80s, Borgvattnet attracted the attention of Tore Forslund, a different kind of "ghost priest". Forslund performed exorcisms on the house but to no avail, quitting within a year. Today, you can stay the night at this infamous vicarage – if you manage to stay a whole night, you will be awarded with a diploma.

TIPS

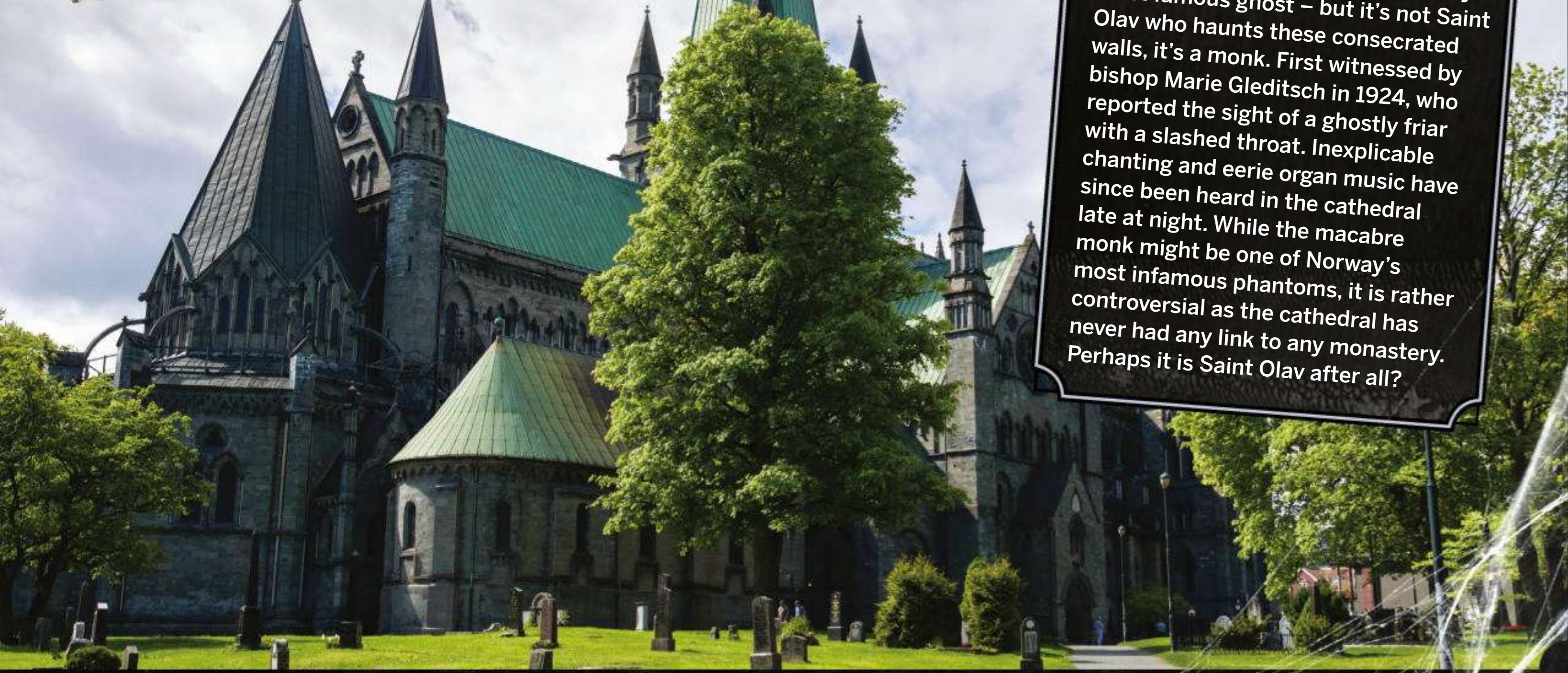
Borgvattnet is about two hours from Östersund via public transport – available on weekdays only. Jump on the number 132 bus from Östersund Busstorget, changing at Stugun for the 321 direct to Borgvattnet. Check out sj.se to plan your journey ahead of time



Above: Dare you stay the night in Sweden's most haunted residence? It's abailable to rent on AirBnB!



Left: A mysterious monk haunts Norway's impressive cathedral, but where did he come from? God only knows.



Below: Nidaros Cathedral dates all the way back to the 11th century

NIDAROS CATHEDRAL

Location: Trondheim, Norway
Time zone: UTC+1
Currency: Norwegian krone

Built in 1070, Nidaros Cathedral is built upon the burial site of King Olav II, who was responsible for Norway's Christianization and has since become the patron saint of the nation. It is also home to Norway' most famous ghost – but it's not Saint Olav who haunts these consecrated walls, it's a monk. First witnessed by bishop Marie Gleditsch in 1924, who reported the sight of a ghostly friar with a slashed throat. Inexplicable chanting and eerie organ music have since been heard in the cathedral late at night. While the macabre monk might be one of Norway's most infamous phantoms, it is rather controversial as the cathedral has never had any link to any monastery. Perhaps it is Saint Olav after all?

SUBTERRANEAN SPOOKS

From slaves to scorned women, it's not only graveyards and abandoned buildings that have their fair share of ghosts, some spirits prefer to seek solace underground…

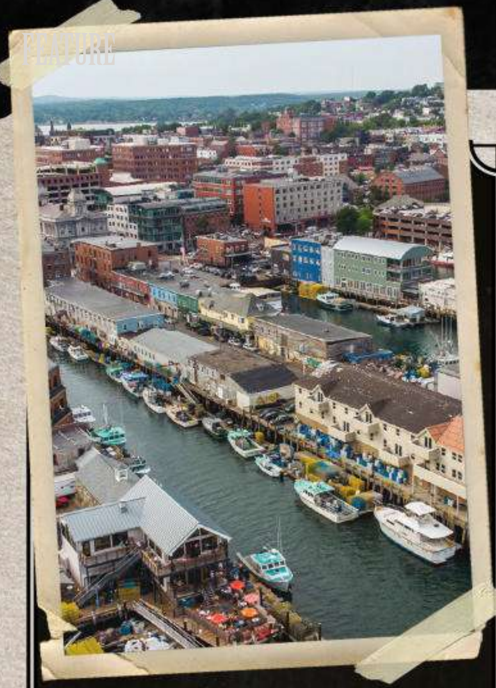
Written by Rosie Cranie-Higgs

WIELICZKA SALT MINES

Location: Wieliczka, Poland **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Polish zloty

Dating back to the 13th century, the Wieliczka Salt Mines are 300km of tunnels dug, at their deepest, up to 327 metres underground. The mines were operational for an astonishing 750 years. Tourists can visit chiselled statues of mythical figures, a sculpted replica of Da Vinci's The Last Supper, and the ethereal, soaring Chapel of St Kinga, adorned with carved religious murals and salt-rock chandeliers. The Wieliczka ghost is no one you'd want to meet - seeing this Warden who guards the salt is an omen of an imminent catastrophe such as a fire, flood, or cave-in.

Image source: Getty, Alamy



SHANGHAI TUNNELS

Location: Portland, Oregon, USA
Time zone: UTC-8
Currency: US dollar

Shady and hushed-up, the Shanghai Tunnels connected waterfront saloons, hotels, opium dens, gambling parlours, and more to the Willamette River's docks via trapdoors. From the mid-1800s to the early 1940s, they transported goods and, allegedly, thousands of kidnap victims a year. Women were sold as prostitutes and men as slaves to ship captains who needed crews. Rumour has it that the tunnels' existence was covered up to protect Portland's reputation, which is no surprise - once they fell in, many trafficked souls never got out, beaten, starved, and left for dead in holding cells. Visitors have experienced childlike whistling, fingers stroking their hair and bodies, attempts to knock them over, and even the ghost of "Sam", who turns off the lights and moves things around as you walk by - he's friendly, though, so don't worry! Today, the only way to visit is on the Haunted Shanghai Tunnel Tour from Old Town Pizza and Brewing, where you'll hear about Nina, who died in the building's elevator shaft in the late 1800s and can be seen watching diners in a black dress or wandering the basement, snatches of her perfume caught on the air.

OWL MOUNTAIN TUNNELS

Location: Lower Silesia, Poland **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Euro

Beneath Poland's oldest mountain range, the Owl Mountains, lies Project Riese (Project Giant), a colossal underground complex left unfinished by the Nazis, which apparently would have been Hitler's headquarters and a military shelter. Built in atrocious conditions by concentration camp prisoners, of which 5,000 died and are supposedly buried in mass graves, is it any wonder the complex is haunted? Less macabre is the Polish folktale of the "Nazi gold train", said to have vanished into the mountain in 1945 with 300+ tonnes of pilfered valuables, weapons, and art. Explorers claimed to have discovered it via radar in 2015, but investigations revealed that the images were actually of natural rock formations.

HELLFIRE CAVES

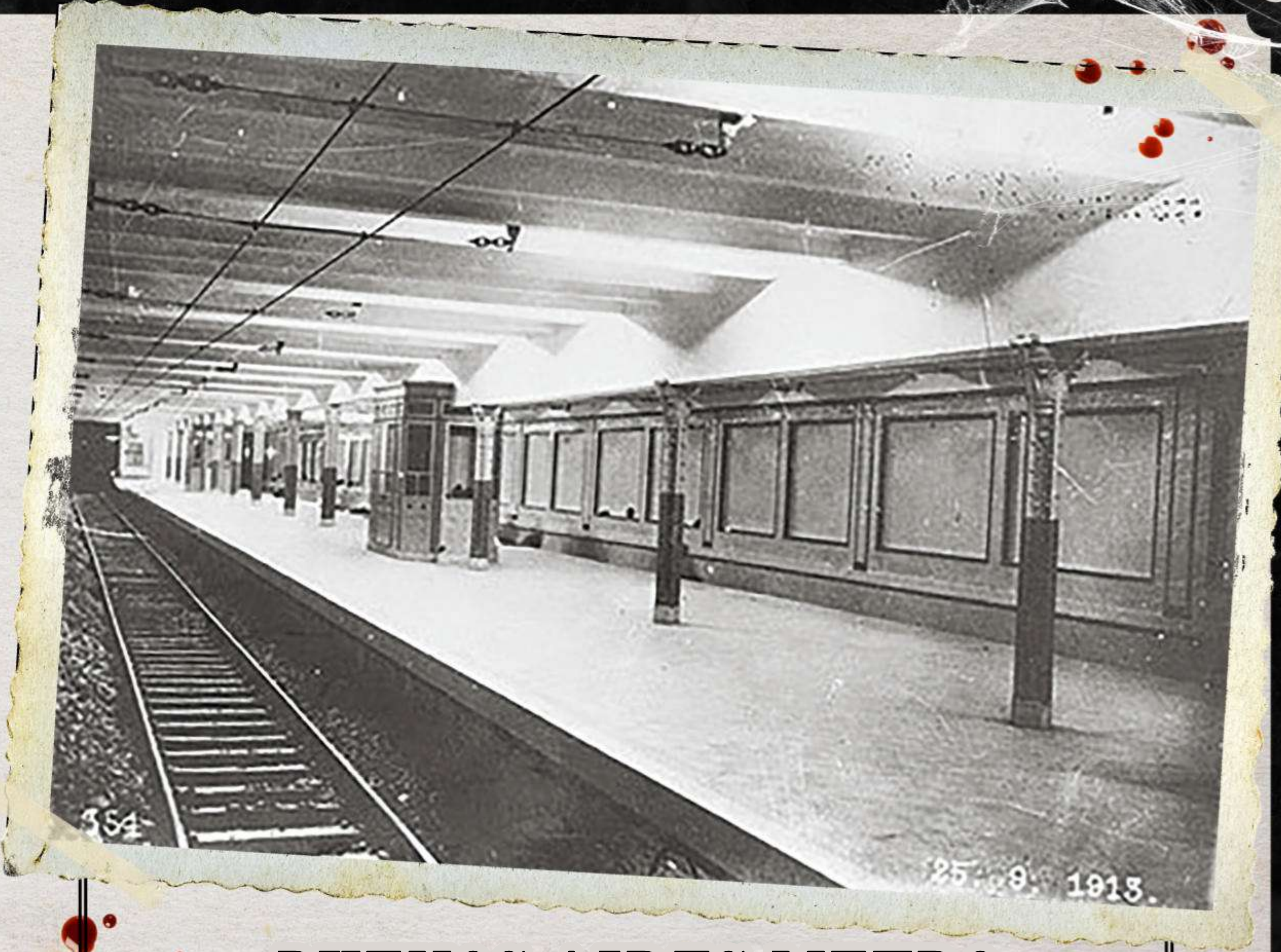
Location: West Wycombe, England, UK **Time zone:** UTC-0 **Currency:** Pound sterling

In the mid-1700s among the Chiltern Hills, Sir Francis Dashwood began excavating the Hellfire Caves as the new home of his hedonistic Hellfire Club, the Order of the Friars of St. Francis of Wycombe. Descending up to 400 metres underground, the labyrinth of caves winds through tunnels and chambers culminating at the Inner Temple. What happened here until 1776 is up for debate, as the caves don't give up their secrets. They do, however, give up their ghosts. In the late 1700s, 16-year-old Suki, barmaid at the George and Dragon (still going strong!), was meant to elope with her beau at the caves. It was a trick, though, played by suitors she'd spurned, and the night tragically led to her death. To this day, she mournfully wanders the caves, hoping to find her lost love and finally become his wife. Club secretary Paul Whitehead also haunts the caves and the hills above, doomed to spend eternity searching for his heart - bizarrely, he had it buried separately when he died, and it was stolen in 1839. Overnight ghost hunters report chanting from the Inner Temple, supernatural touches, and feelings of abject terror. These events, open to the public, usually sell out - would you brave one?

WHO WERE THE HELLFIRE CLUB?

No, it's got nothing to do with Eddie Munson… These secret brotherhoods of high-society folks, scattered throughout 18th Century Britain and Ireland, were unrestrained and nihilistic. Sir Francis Dashwood's club's motto, "Do what thou wilt," speaks for itself and was later adopted by infamous occultist Aleister Crowley. Rumours hissed of blasphemic rituals, obscene orgies and drunken parties in honour of pagan gods. With phallic symbols and demons decorating the walls of their lairs, it's easy to see why!

THE INNER TEMPLE



BUENOS AIRES METRO: PASCO AND ALBERTI STATION

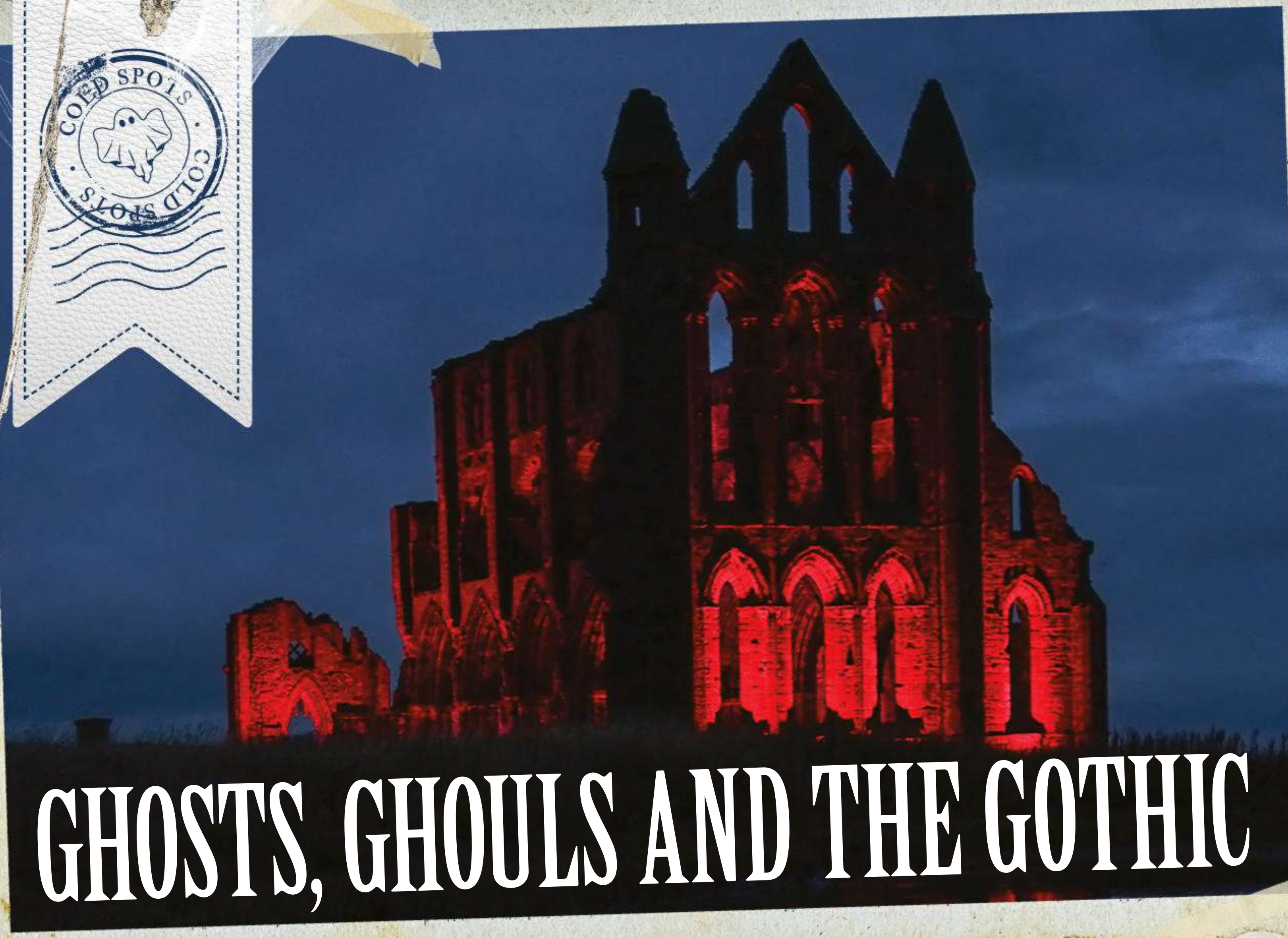
Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina Time zone: UTC-3 Currency: Argentinian peso

Opened in 1913, Buenos Aires Metro's Line A is the oldest in South America and allegedly the most haunted. Its rushed construction claimed several workers' lives when a wall in Alberti collapsed, and since then, travellers passing the station on the 23:30 train can spot their shovel-wielding ghosts. After midnight, the silhouettes of passengers in period dress materialise on the platform, and at the same time in Pasco, something kills the security cameras… and when they come back on, workers are chilled by translucent figures glaring into the lens.

THE PHANTOM BRIDE OF LINE

Either left at the altar or forced to marry a man she didn't love, this poor young woman threw herself onto the tracks, and her ghost haunts Pasco and Alberti stations in her 19th-century wedding dress. Several workers who quit blamed her presence, so is her story true?

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Wikipedia Commons/Public Domain/ Sking



GHOSTS, GHOULS AND THE GOTHIC

Whitby may seem like an unassuming, seaside town to outsiders, but beneath its picture-postcard façade, lies a world of ghostly and gothic treasures

Location:
Whitby,
North Yorkshire,
England, UK

Time zone:
UTC

Currency:
Pound sterling

Tips: Visit in October for Whitby Goth Weekend and the Bizarre Bazaar

Whitby was not only beloved by gloomy Victorians, but hosts the UK's longest-running goth festival and was the backdrop to Dracula's formative adventures. In 1890, a little known writer called Bram Stoker visited Whitby to recover from a gruelling theatre tour of Scotland. What he found in Whitby would catapult him into a household name for decades to come. Against the backdrop of Whitby's ancient abbey, clifftop graveyard and dramatic vistas, he would craft the story of Count Dracula. Shadows of the vampiric nobleman can be found throughout the town. The Royal Hotel that hosted Bram Stoker is still in business today, and sits opposite a bench dedicated to the view that inspired the creation of Dracula. Passing through the town's famous Whale Bone Arch (erected in 1853 to commemorate the town's historic whaling trade) the view of St Mary's church and Tate Hill sands come into view across the bay. In Stoker's *Dracula*, the ship Demeter runs around at Tate Hill Sands. The bloodthirsty count had been travelling in the belly of the ship, and emerged as an enormous black dog which raced up the Abbey's 199 steps and across to St Mary's Churchyard. However, Dracula is not the only spectral dog in Whitby's past! The Barguest Hound is an enormous ghostly dog with glowing red eyes who roams the streets of Whitby, producing a howl that can only be heard by those about to die.

It's little wonder that St Mary's inspired Stoker as the clifftop church has some of the most dramatic

and spooky views in the whole country. Founded in 1110, the church is a treasure trove of historical treats, including rare 18th century box pews marked with the phrase 'for strangers only'. The churchyard is a popular tourist draw, filled with fascinating headstones telling tales of tragedies at sea and decorated with a wide range of dramatic funerary art. However, most terrifying of all, St Mary's has suffered from land slips in recent years that not only damaged the churchyard, but have caused human remains to drop onto the street below.

Whitby Abbey has been an imposing silhouette on Whitby's east cliff for over 1500 years and continues to welcome visitors from around the world every day. Not only is it a gothic icon, but has so much history within its grounds. From medieval coffins to royal burials and archaeological artefacts reaching as far back as the Bronze Age, the ruins of the Abbey are a must for any traveller. Whitby Abbey is also said to be home to the ghosts of several former nuns and monks, including the Abbey's founder, St Hilda. She has been spotted looking out from the Abbey's highest windows. In darker stories, she is joined by the ghost of Constance de Beverly, a nun who broke her vows of chastity. As a punishment, she was bricked up alive within the Abbey's walls. Her cries and desperate pleas for mercy can still be heard echoing across the ruins to this day… or rather, night.

A SOMBRE SOUVENIR

W Hammond, 112 Church St

When Queen Victoria's husband died in 1861, she entered a period of mourning that would last the rest of her life, 40 years later in 1901. During this time, she dressed exclusively in black, her accessories encrusted with Whitby jet. This fossilised wood quickly became the gemstone of choice for the grieving woman-about-town and has long been a symbol of death and memorialisation. Today, there are many Whitby jet shops across Whitby, but the finest of these is W Hammond, which was established in 1860 and can be found by the 199 steps. Not only do they produce a variety of beautiful jewellery, but provide a restaurant, café, workshop and entire museum dedicated to the rare and unique gemstone!

> "Against the backdrop of the ancient abbey, clifftop graveyard and dramatic vistas, Bram Stoker would craft the story of Count Dracula"

HANDS OF GLORY

Whitby Museum, Pannett Park

The Hand of Glory is a dried and pickled severed hand which was once the treasured possession of burglars. It was believed that if you pickled the hand of a hanged man (preferably a murderer), it would make for a very useful candlestick for criminals. If you placed a candle in the Hand of Glory and entered a house at night, it would plunge the whole house into a deep sleep. The thief could go about his business undisturbed. Whitby's example was found above the doorway of a nearby cottage and is one of only a handful (!) remaining in the world.

Images source: Getty; Alamy; www.badobadop.co.uk

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

The historical wonders that boast spooky silences, ancient and arcane purposes, and terrifying legends

Written by April Madden

THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS

Location: Luxor, Egypt **Time zone:** UTC+2 **Currency:** Egyptian pound

The ancient Egyptians had a very deep and meaningful belief in life after death that expressed itself in many ways: in the embalming rituals and preservation techniques they used on their dead, in the grave goods they left with their deceased to make their afterlives more comfortable, and in the Valley of the Kings, which houses the rock-built tombs of pharaohs from the 16th to the 11th centuries BCE and is a forerunner to the awesome later necropolises of the pyramids.

The most famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings is that of Tutankhamun. The boy-king's tomb was uncovered by archaeologist Howard Carter in November 1922, but almost immediately rumours of a curse began to haunt the discovery. It started with a cobra – the symbol of Egyptian royalty's protector goddess Wadjet and worn on their heads as the uraeus – making its way into Carter's Egyptian home and devouring his pet bird; the unfortunate canary was found deceased within its jaws.

Popular legend has it that the Curse of Tutankhamun was responsible for five deaths, including that of Carter himself, although he died 16 years after opening the tomb. George Herbert, 5th Earl of Carnarvon, the excavation's financial backer, was the first to go: four months after the opening of the tomb he shaved over a mosquito bite. The wound became infected and he died of blood poisoning. His death caused a sensation – only weeks before an English novelist had written a high-profile letter to the New York World magazine in which she quoted an obscure tome that claimed dire consequences would follow upon the opening of sealed ancient Egyptian tombs. A few weeks afterwards financier George Jay Gould I, who had also visited the tomb, died of a fever. The world now firmly believed in the Curse of Tutankhamun, and when a member of the excavation team and Carter's secretary both died a few years later that belief was reinforced – even though the elderly AC Mace died of pneumonia and Captain Richard Bethell is suspected to have been murdered.

Given the sheer amount of ancient Egyptian tombs that have been picked over by archaeologists and grave robbers alike, it's only to be expected that legends of supernatural misfortune falling on would-be treasure hunters have arisen. Some graves in the Valley of the Kings really do have curses inscribed on them however – although they're aimed at exhorting the ancienaat priests of the necropolis to do their jobs properly!

Image source: Getty; Alamy

POMPEII & HERCULANEUM

Location: Pompei, Campania, Italy
Time zone: UTC+1
Currency: Euro

It started with a rain of stones. As tiny pebbles poured from the sky for around 18 hours, the wisest of Pompeii's citizens packed up their valuables and left. It was October 79 CE; people wore their heavier winter clothes and the shops were stocked with autumnal fare. The evacuation was still in full swing – Roman admiral Pliny the Elder had ordered his fleet out of nearby Misenum to ferry evacuees to safety – when the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius intensified. Pyroclastic flows poured from its maw, and red-hot ash clouds enveloped the town, suffocating and incinerating over 1000 people.

The remains of those people can still be found in Pompeii. Some are crouched in an attempt at self-preservation, others appear to have been knocked off their feet. A pair of lovers are locked in a final embrace; grimly, many remains are of slaves who were kept shackled to walls and abandoned when the eruption began. Many victims were found near or with the possessions they were trying to take with them, like the elaborate 'sorceress' spell kit' discovered in 2019. Today's eerie atmosphere is at odds with the art and artefacts that depict life in Pompeii before the eruption as vibrant and cultured.

THE RUINS OF BABYLON

Location: Hillah, Iraq Time zone: UTC +3 Currency: Iraqi dinar

Once the world's largest city, the name Babylon conjures images of ancient wonder. Its Hanging Gardens were among the original Seven Wonders of the World; sadly no trace remains of them in the site's archaeological record. The biblical Tower of Babel myth is set there; it has its roots in an earlier Mesopotamian story about the god of wisdom, Enki. Both have as their theme humanity striving to dizzying heights of technological prowess until they pose a challenge to the established divine order. God, or a pantheon of gods, are worried by this, so they twisted the single language of humanity into a myriad of different tongues, bringing miscommunication, strife, and war. The Spell of Enki myth takes this further, calling on wild beasts to prey on humans to reduce their numbers.

The ancients weren't the only ones who encountered bad luck after trying to use Babylon for their own gain. Notorious Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein poured money into its restoration. Sadly, he also demolished the village of Qwaresh, making its residents homeless, and arrogantly had his name and likeness inscribed alongside those of Babylon's most famous king, Nebuchadnezzar, in an attempt to hijack history for his own glorification. During the war that deposed him, US and Polish troops were also criticised for damaging the site.

NEWGRANGE

Location: County Meath, Ireland Time zone: UTC Currency: Euro

Today it's known as Newgrange, but for centuries the Irish called it Sí an Bhrú. Sí (or síd/sídh) relates to the faeries – not the winged flower creatures of the Victorian imagination but the terrifying fae of Irish legend. Bhrú is often anglicised as 'brugh', and in Irish faerie legends these are where the Aos Sí, or faerie folk live; a brugh is a faerie palace hidden in a hollow hill. Also numbered among the fae are the Tuatha Dé Danann, the old gods of Ireland, and Newgrange is traditionally associated with the Irish all-father, the Dagda, and with his handsome, heroic son Aengus, god of love, whose mother was Boann, the goddess of the nearby River Boyne. Newgrange is part of a complex of ancient tombs, henges and standing stones called Brú na Bóinne. Older than Stonehenge, we're still not sure of the ancient site's purpose. Newgrange, like Stongehenge, lights up on the winter solstice, when the sun streams through a carefully placed aperture above the entrance, flooding the normally dark inner chamber with bright sunlight. The sun is associated with the god Aengus' conception; his father, the Dagda, used his power over the elements to make the sun stand to conceal Boanne's pregnancy from her husband Elcmar, the lord of horses.

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

Location: Northeastern China **Time zone:** UTC+8 **Currency:** Yuan

China was not always the unbreakable bastion it likes to present itself as today. Before and during its unification into Imperial China, it was a target for hit-and-run groups of heavily armed nomads riding on fast, tireless horses. Their guerilla attacks on ancient China's borders forced the construction of a marvel. But the Great Wall, or Wànli Chángchéng ('Ten Thousand Li Wall', a li is the traditional Chinese measure of distance and is about a third of a mile) is not one single structure. Rather, it is a series of border walls constructed in different places and at different times, and occasionally joined together when the need arose. Its most famous sections were built by the Ming Dynasty between 1368 and 1644.

Despite the legends of the bones of worked-to-death builders being incorporated into its cement, no human remains are present in the body of the wall; the Ming-era bricks' awesome staying power is down to the use of sticky rice mortar, made from rice soup and slaked lime (calcium hydroxide). Another popular myth about the Great Wall that is also untrue: it is not really visible from space, unless you are in very low Earth orbit and know exactly where you need to look!

FENGDU GHOST CITY

Location: Near Chongqing, Southwest China
Time zone: UTC+8
Currency: Yuan

Located on the Ming Mountain, Fengdu is a complex of shrines, temples and monasteries devoted to the afterlife and dating back nearly two thousand years. Legend has it that the site was established in the first century AD, when two imperial officials came to the mountain to practise Taoism in solitude and in the process, became immortals. Their names, Yin Changsheng and Wang Fangping, combined as Yinwang translate to "King of Hell", so the site was dedicated to the underworld.

Today, the site is a tourist destination and is accessible via Bus Line 109. Alternatively, many river cruises stop off at the Ghost City.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

GHOST TOWNS

Abandoned places preserve a snapshot of how life once was, although their tendency to crumble makes them an eerie place to visit...

Written by Icy Sedgwick

BODIE

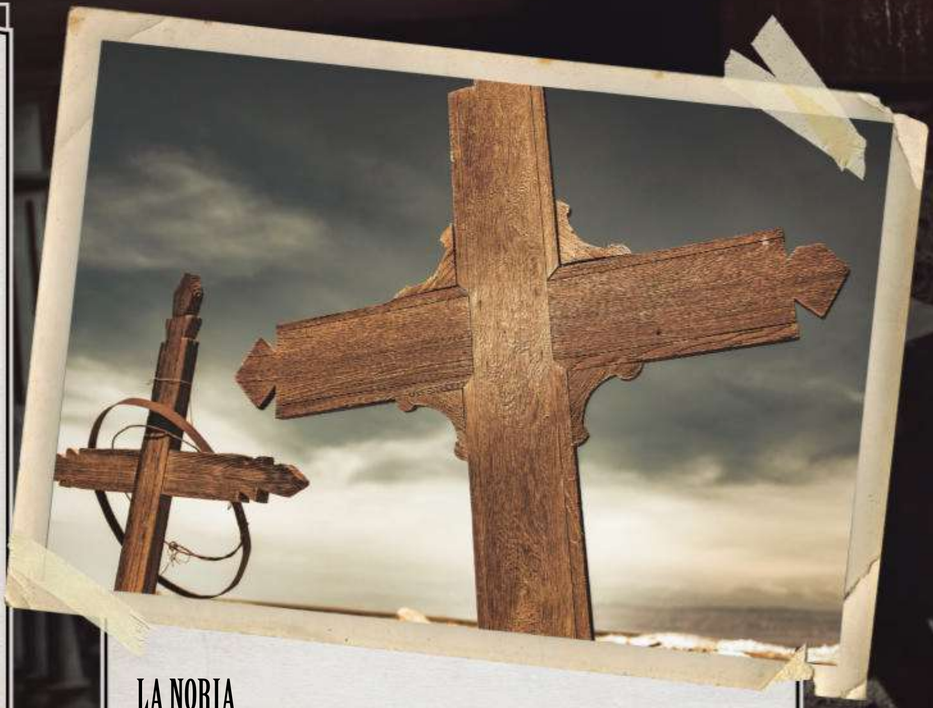
Location: Mono County, California, USA
Time zone: UTC+8 Currency: US dollar

Bodie, a former gold mining town in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains, is California's most famous ghost town. Founded in 1859, it was a bustling town by 1880, full of gunfights, gambling, and girls galore, with two churches compared to 65 saloons!

Its decline began in 1882, although people lived there until the 1940s. Bodie became a State Historic Park in 1962, and the town preserves buildings as they are; it doesn't restore them. This "state of arrested decay" adds to Bodie's eerie quality.

The town still has 100 structures standing, including the Bodie Jail, where John Wayne was photographed. But beware the Bodie Curse! Taking anything from the town - even a stone - will curse you with bad luck until you return the item. Some people think that Bodie's ghosts stand guard over the town, and people see and hear various spectres in both the remaining houses and Bodie Cemetery.

> "Some think that Bodie's ghosts stand guard over the town"



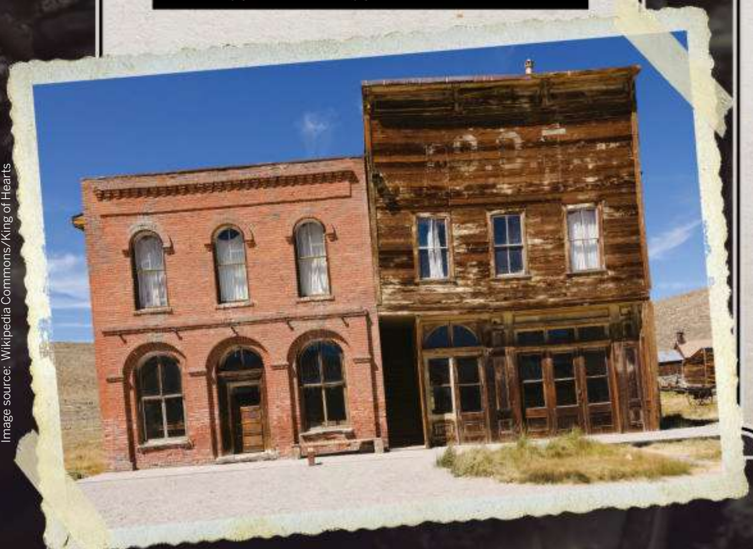


Image source: Wikipedia Commons/King of Hearts

LA NORIA

Location: Atacama Desert, Tarapacá Region, Chile
Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: Chilean peso

La Noria was a saltpeter mining town founded in 1826, although the discovery of a synthetic version during WWI led to the town's downfall and tough times for the residents. Only crumbling ruins remain, though visitors have seen ghosts and shadows throughout the ruins, hearing footsteps and voices in empty streets.

The cemetery overlooking La Noria is creepy since many exposed coffins are broken open, revealing their occupants. Bones lie scattered among the graves, and mine shafts pose an extra danger to the unwary. Don't linger after dark; one local legend says the dead leave their graves after sunset and travel to La Noria, angry about their disturbed rest.

It is difficult to find the town, and the only road leading to it is unreliable, unless you have an off-road vehicle. Take plenty of supplies, water, and a compass, since the Atacama Desert can be dangerous for the unprepared.

NOT SAFE TO TRAVEL!

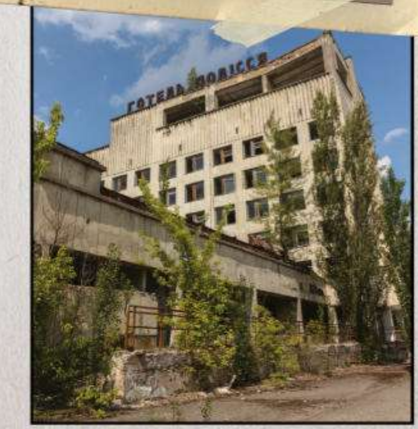
PRIPYAT

Location: Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine **Time zone:** UTC+2 **Currency:** Hryvnia

Pripyat lies 62 miles away from Kyiv in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, made infamous in 1986 when Reactor No. 4, at the nearby Chernobyl nuclear plant, exploded. The city was only founded in 1970, but it was abandoned after the inhabitants were evacuated, and nature has reclaimed vast swathes of it.

You can only enter Pripyat on a licensed Chernobyl tour. Guides are essential to keep you safe and they follow the strict guidelines regarding exposure to radiation (although the level in the areas open to tours is less than you'd get having an X-ray).

The amusement park is Pripyat's most iconic spot, although the abandoned swimming pools and football stadium also offer unique photographic opportunities. The basement of the abandoned infirmary is highly radioactive thanks to the firefighter uniforms stored there, but the hospital is worth seeing...though perhaps from outside.



GARNET

Location: Drummond, Montana, USA
Time zone: UTC-7
Currency: US dollar

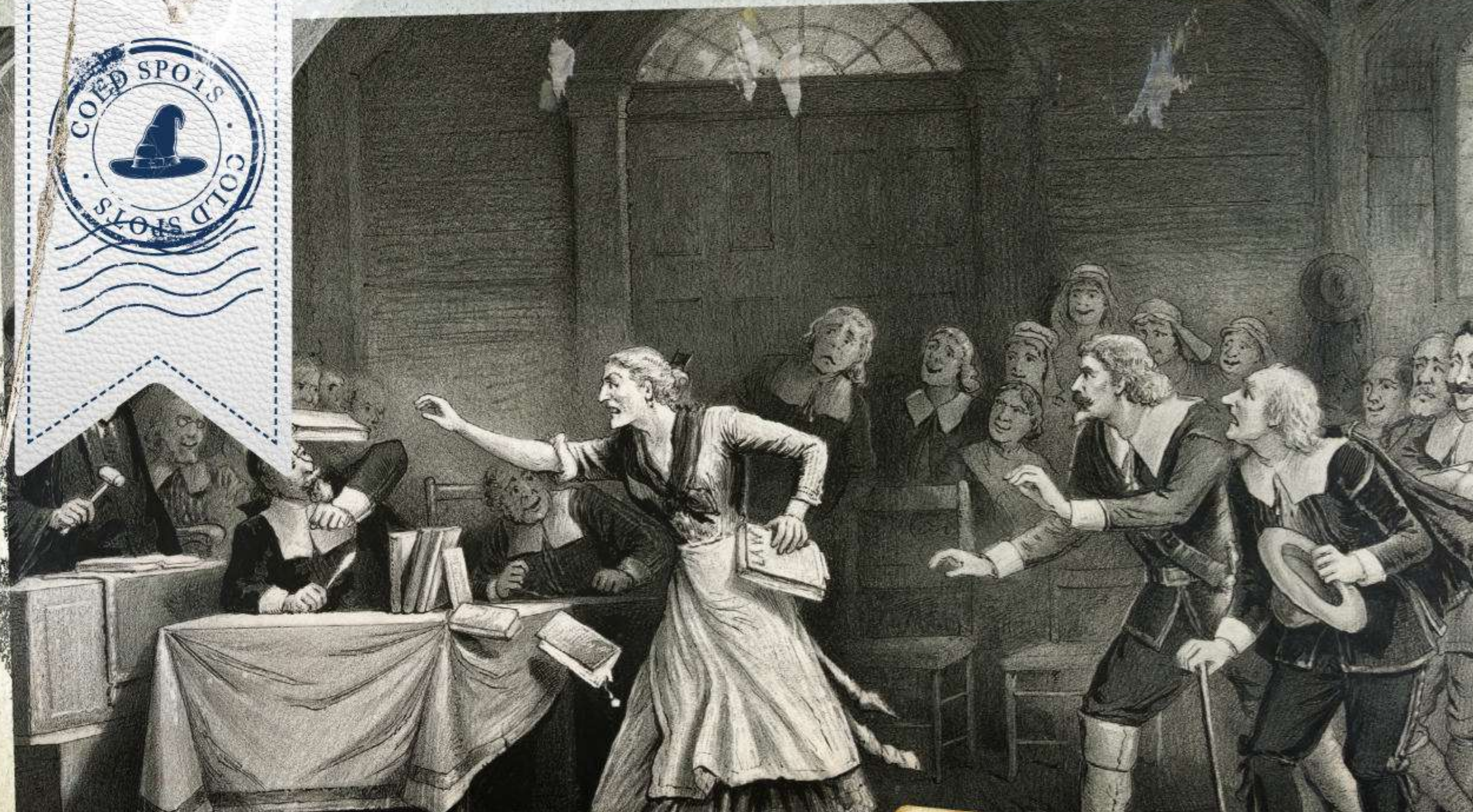
Garnet, a gold and garnet mining town, was established in 1895, It had a newspaper office, a drug store, hotels, and a school. By 1912, many mines had run dry and a fire destroyed half of the town. People moved back in the 1930s when gold prices increased, but WWII prompted residents to abandon the town in 1940. The Bureau of Land Management maintains the remaining buildings, making it Montana's best preserved ghost town. Many people believe Kelly's Saloon is haunted, with people hearing laughter and music when the town is empty in winter, and footsteps and doors closing inside the Wells Hotel raise questions.

LAKE SHAWNEE AMUSEMENT PARK

Location: Princeton, West Virginia, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

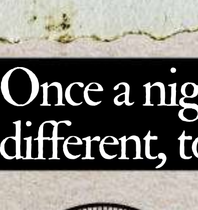
Closed since 1988, six deaths on the premises gave the park a reputation of being cursed. The land was also the site of the Lake Shawnee massacre, where three children died. Paranormal investigators claim to have heard children laughing while the swings move on their own in the empty park.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;



THE WITCH CITY

Once a nightmare for anyone daring to be different, today Salem is a witch's dream



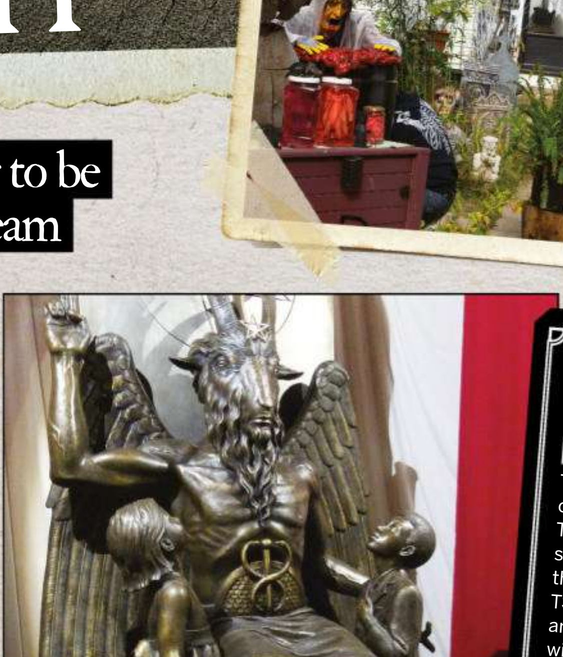
Location:
Salem, Mass, USA

Time zone:
UTC-5

Currency:
US dollar

Tips: The best time to visit Salem is undoubtedly October, when the entire city embraces the Halloween spirit

The historic coastal city of Salem is synonymous with witches, thanks to the infamous Salem Witch Trials of 1692. Nineteen so-called witches were executed by hanging, while numerous others died in prison and one man was brutally pressed to death. Since 1880 the city has been priding itself as a dark tourist hotspot, issuing its first tourist guide with a list of key sites associated with the trials. These days the city is less concerned about punishing witches and more prone to celebrating them, having re-defined itself as a witch safehaven full of alternative-minded folks.



THE SATANIC TEMPLE HEADQUARTERS

64 Bridge Street

The new religious activist organisation The Satanic Temple's headquarters are situated on Bridge Street and they are well worth a visit. The TST maintains an art gallery and permanent exhibits on witch-hunts, Satanism and moral panics, as well as holding ceremonies, events, screenings and more. There is also a gigantic (and controversial) statue of Baphomet that makes a great insta-pic.

WITCH HUNT HORRORS

Various sites across the city

Old Burying Point Cemetery on Charter Street is one of the United States' oldest cemeteries. Judge Jonathan Hathorne, one of the trail's leading judges, is buried here. Beside this burial ground is the Witch Trials Memorial, where you can pay your respects to all those who were needlessly executed. The Witch House's former owner, Jonathan Corwin, and his nephew, George, who was also involved in the witch trials, are buried in Salem's second oldest cemetery, Broad Street. Howard Street Cemetery is said to be the location where Giles Corey was pressed to death and buried in a shallow grave. The cursed spot where the 19 others found guilty of witchcraft were hanged is Proctor's Ledge, down the hill from Gallows Hill Park. The victims' names are engraved in a semi-circular wall.

THE WITCH HOUSE

310 Essex Street

The iconic Witch House is the only structure with ties to the witch trials still standing. Restored to look like it would have back in 1692, it's the former home of Jonathan Corwin, a prominent judge involved in sentencing the unfortunate souls accused of witchcraft at the infamous trials. In 1719, his descendants were struck by the "Corwin Curse", whereby eight of the family died prematurely, leaving only his two young grandsons alive and crippling the estate. Today, the house is a museum and a popular spot for photos.

WITCHY WONDERS

Essex Street and Beyond

Salem has become a sanctuary for goths and self-identified witches since the mid 20th century. Take a stroll down Essex Street and you'll be spoiled for choice with the array of witch-themed stores (including Salem's oldest – Crow Haven Corner) to pick up a souvenir, restock your wardrobe or have your palms read. Also worth checking out are HausWitch on Washington Street, Emporium 32 on Central Street, Hive & Forge on Church Street and The Witchery on Wharf Street, who run workshops. Don't forget to snap a selfie with *Bewitched*'s Samantha Stephens – her statue is in Lappin Park. Visit in October for Haunted Happenings, a city wide celebration with events such as the Salem Horror Fest, The Witches' Halloween Ball, and various other markets, film screenings, tours and alternative-themed activities.

WHERE TO STAY...

THE MERCHANT, WASHINGTON STREET

Built on the former site of the trials' high sheriff's house, this boutique hotel is said to be haunted by those so-called witches he tortured in his basement.

THE SALEM INN, SUMMER STREET

Guests have reported unexplained noises in Room 17...

HAWTHORNE HOTEL, WASHINGTON SQUARE

This historic hotel is home to numerous spirits of sailors and seamen and holds an annual costume ball every Halloween.

SALEM'S MUSEUMS

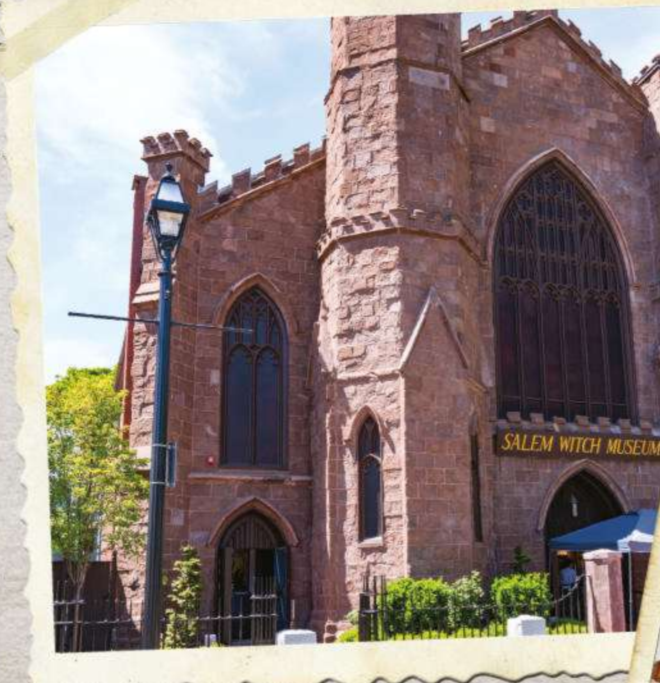
Essex Street and Beyond

If you're keen to learn more about the horrific trials, The Salem Witch Museum on Washington Square is essential for an immersive, thorough educational delve into the witch-hunts and witchcraft. That's not to be confused with the Witch History Museum, where you can check out life-size scenes depicting the trails, and the Salem Witch Board Museum, which explores the history of ouija, both on Essex Street. On Derby Street, you can learn more about the myths and realities of witches and their craft at Salem Witch Village. Salem 1630: Pioneer Village is the oldest living history museum in the United States and the place to go if you really want to discover what life was like in 1692, while the Witch Dungeon Museum on Lynde Street reveals what life was like for those awaiting trial. For those who want a break from all the witch-hunting, Count Orlock's Nightmare Gallery is a fun retreat for horror lovers.

THE TRIAL TRAIL

The Salem Witch Museum recommends a three-mile walking route of the city's witch trial locations which is self-guided and takes around two hours.

For more information check out: salemwitchmuseum.com/locations/recommended-route-around-salem



Above: The Salem Witch Museum not only looks at the events of 1692, but the historical perceptions of witches and witchcraft

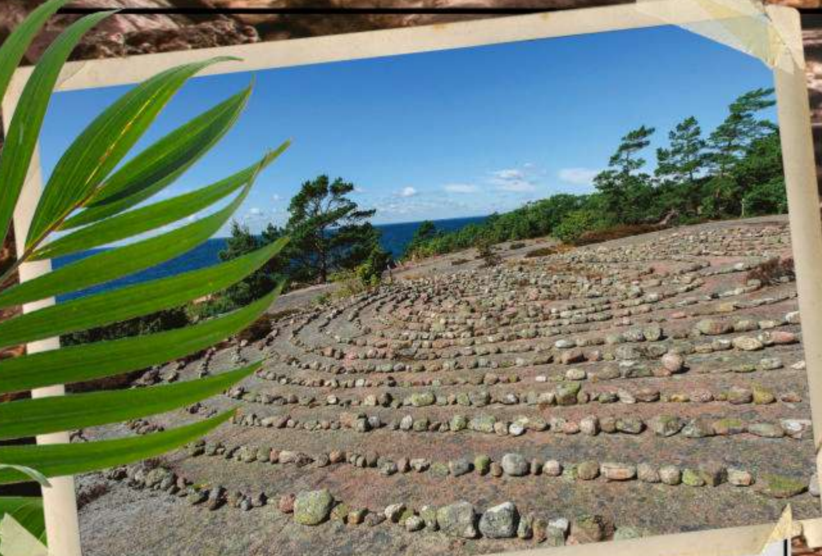
Right: Roger Conant, the British colonist who established the initial community in Salem back in 1626

Images © Getty; Alamy

ILL-FATED ISLANDS

Islands are the epitome of isolation. Surrounded by water, your only escape is to risk the peril of the depths below. Let's hope you don't wind up sharing your seclusion with something sinister…

Written by Alice Pattillo



THE BLÅKULLA (BLÅ JUNGFRUN ISLAND)

Location: Kalmarsund, Sweden
Time zone: UTC +1 Currency: Swedish krona

Before their annual trip to the Brocken (see page 103), regional witches would make a stop off to the Blåkulla on Maundy Thursday. The location of this place was known as Blå Jungfrun Island ("The Blue Maiden"), as using its true name was said to conjure up a storm. The 1km granite island in the Baltic sea is home to an ancient stone labyrinth, the Trojeborg, from which it is forbidden to steal stones (or else deal with the cursed consequences). Evidence of ancient ritual practices have been discovered in recent years giving credence to the rumours that the island was indeed used for witchcraft. Whether or not the island really is a sanctuary for sorcery remains unknown, but the witches' antics form a widely observed part of Swedish folklore, with young girls dressing as witches every Easter.

POVEGLIA PLAGUE ISLAND

Location: The Venetian Lagoon, Italy
Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Euros

Between Venice and Lido lies one of the most haunted islands in the world. A quarantine station for the ill in the 18th century, it's likely there are mass graves containing the remains of plague victims across the island – as yet uninvestigated. In the 1920s it became the site for an asylum where a doctor allegedly tortured and crudely lobotomized patients, then jumped from the bell tower after being driven mad by ghosts. Now, Poveglia lies abandoned and visits are strictly prohibited – but that hasn't stopped many dark tourists. In 2016, five Americans supposedly tried to stay the night, only to get so creeped out they had to flag down a sailboat – so it's probably best to just snap some pictures from a water taxi.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

ISOLA DELLA GAIOLA

Location: Naples, Italy **Time zone:** UTC+1 **Currency:** Euro

This tiny island near Naples looks like a dream, but there's a reason its lone villa lies uninhabited: it's reportedly cursed. During the 1800s a hermit dubbed Il Mago ("The Wizard") made the island his home until mysteriously vanishing. Next came Luigi de Negri – who built the villa – but he soon suffered financial ruin. Since then, there have been a string of murders, heart attacks, madness and suicide and one man even died while just considering buying the skerry. Other owners include Fiat boss Gianni Agnelli and billionaire John Paul Getty, who both suffered numerous tragedies. Still fancy a visit? Access the island by visiting the Gaiola Underwater Park and swimming, or take a boat from the coast.

> "This tiny island near Naples looks like a dream, but there's a reason its lone villa lies uninhabited"

ISLA DE LAS MUÑECAS (THE ISLAND OF THE DOLLS)

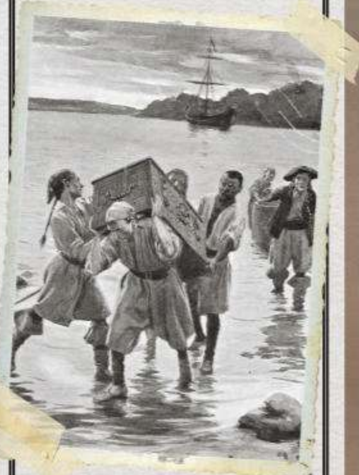
Location: The Chinampas of Xochimilco, Mexico City, Mexico
Time zone: UTC -6 **Currency:** Mexican peso

This eerie floating garden just south of Mexico City is home to hundreds of dolls, their decapitated heads and severed limbs tied to trees. They were put up by the island's caretaker Don Julian Santana Barrera when he discovered a little girl drowned in mysterious circumstances. Soon after, he discovered a doll floating in the water and, assuming it was hers, tied it to a tree to show respect to her spirit. Forever haunted by his inability to save her, he kept hanging more dolls to satisfy her spirit. After 50 years of collecting dolls and adorning the island with them, he was found dead – drowned in the same spot he had discovered the girl. The dolls are said to have been possessed and many have reported them moving on their own, opening their eyes and even whispering to each other.

CHARLES ISLAND

Location: Milford, Connecticut, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

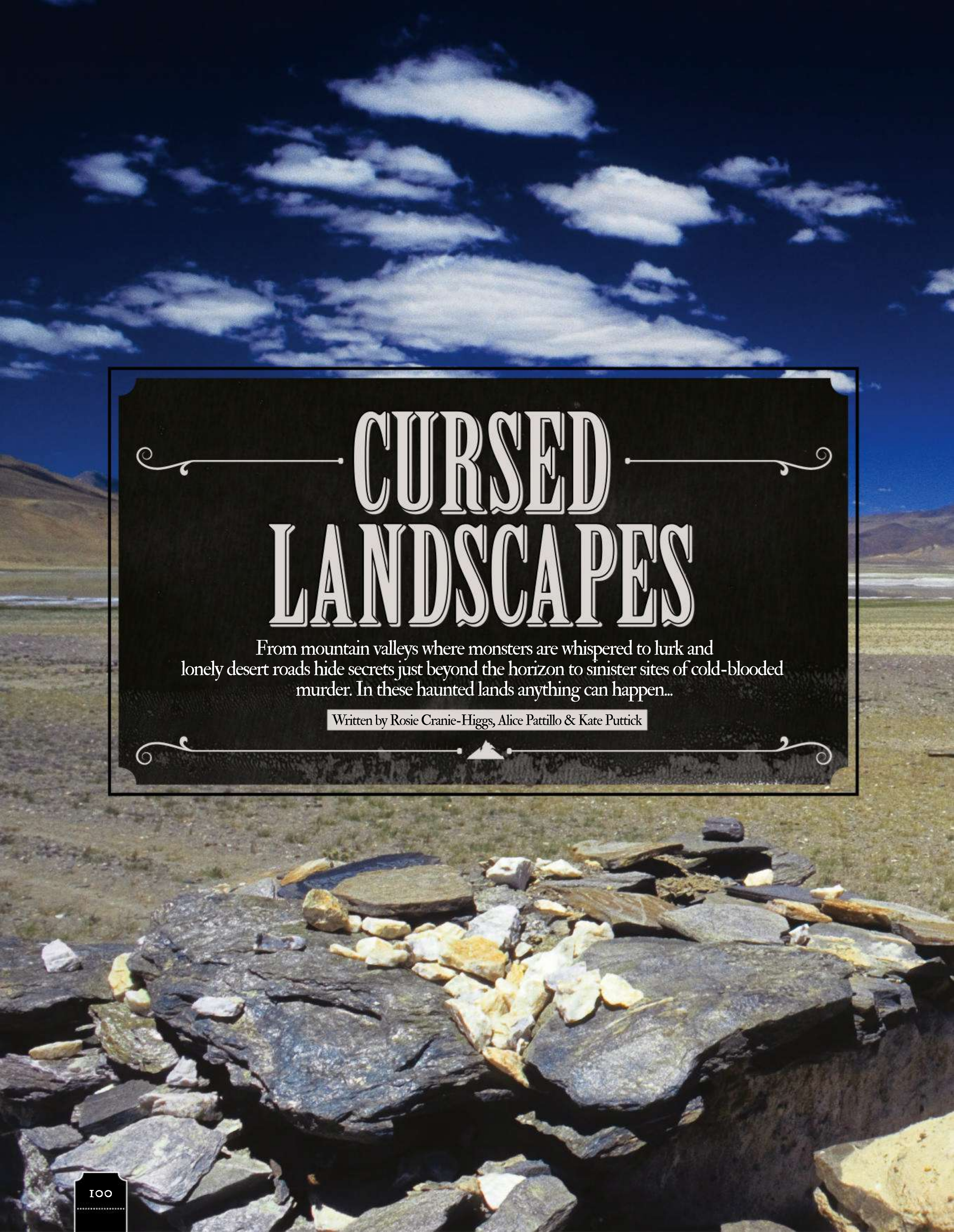
Charles island has not one, not two, but three curses placed upon it. The first by a Paugussett chief, the second by Captain Kidd in order to keep his treasure safe and the third is thanks to the 16th century Mexican Emperor Guatimozin, whose jinxed Aztec treasures are said to have been buried upon the island.



PECHE ISLAND

Location: Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: Canadian dollar

In the 19th century, Rosalie Laforet placed a hex upon the land after her family had been driven from their home on the island by businessman Hiram Walker. Soon after, both he and his sons died, his distillery business faded from the annals of history and in 1929 his mansion burned to the ground. The site has remained uninhabited ever since.



CURSED LANDSCAPES

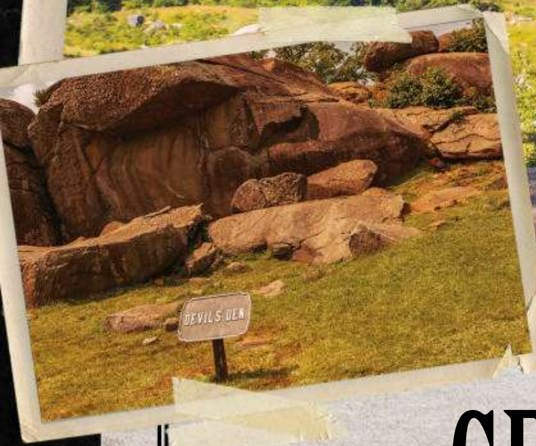
From mountain valleys where monsters are whispered to lurk and lonely desert roads hide secrets just beyond the horizon to sinister sites of cold-blooded murder. In these haunted lands anything can happen...

Written by Rosie Cranie-Higgs, Alice Pattillo & Kate Puttick

TIPS

Don't wind up another ghost story. Venturing into the wilderness requires expert knowledge, experience and equipment. Take proper precautions, research hiking routes and never walk alone

Image source: Getty, Alamy



GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD

Location: Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

Gettysburg is a tremendously haunted town for one reason: the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg. With 50,000 casualties, it was by far the Civil War's bloodiest. No wonder the dead can't leave. In many locations such as Little Round Top, ghostly soldiers march in formation. On Culp's Hill, cries for help beg from the former burial pits, and on the Sachs Covered Bridge, mists rise from the water in the shape of men and a ghost named "Henry" puffs on lit cigarettes. The Devil's Den is the most haunted of all. For centuries, the rocky outcrop was a Native American battleground, and early settlers reported phantom warriors. During The Battle of Gettysburg the Den became known as the "Slaughter Pen". A Texan soldier has been spotted since the 1970s, unkempt and shoeless, and a ghost rider appears to shouting and gunfire before instantly disappearing. The battlefield is now part of National Military Park. You can visit for free, but the guides are worth every penny.

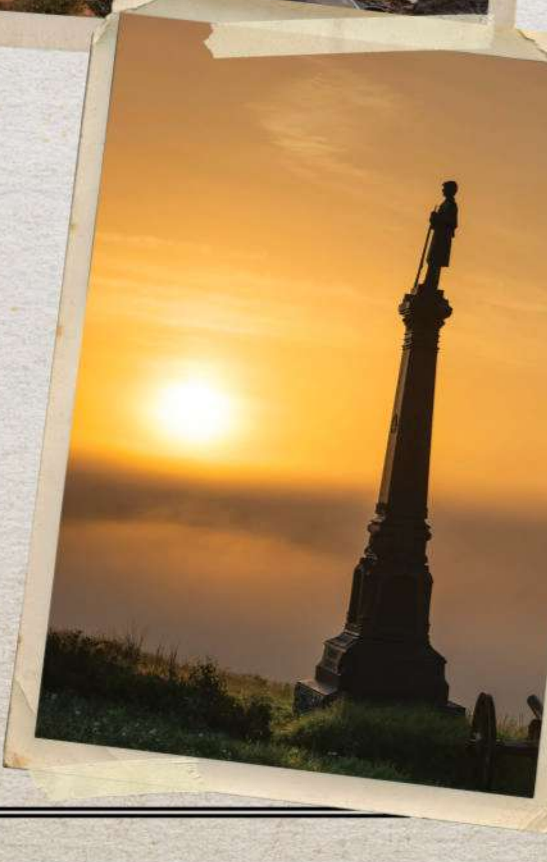
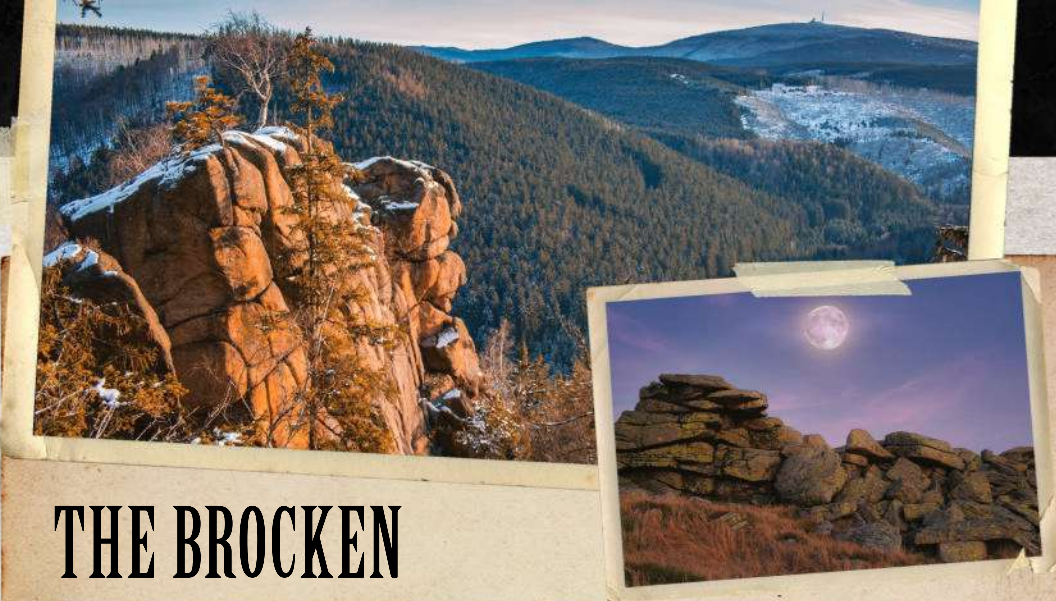


Image source: Getty; Alamy



THE BROCKEN

Location: Andreasberg, Lower Saxony, Germany Time zone: UTC +1 Currency: Euro

The highest peak of the Harz Mountains has long held an association with witches. Upon the top of the mountain are two distinctive rock formations, Teufelskanzel (Devil's Pulpit) and Hexenaltar (Witches' Altar). The peak is cloaked in fog for up to 300 days out of the year, and bitterly cold, which might have something to do with its devilish associations. The Brocken Spectre, a gigantic figure floating in the sky and surrounded by radiating circles of light, has haunted hikers for generations. This optical illusion has only added to the eerie atmosphere of the mountain, where according to lore, witches rode upon broomsticks and goats, gathering beside the stones upon Walpurgisnacht (30 April) to perform Satanic rituals. Inspired by the legend, 17th Century playwright Goethe gave his infamous play *Faust* the backdrop of the Brocken, where the eponymous Faust sells his soul to the devil. Today, many Germans celebrate Walpugis Night in a similar fashion to Halloween.

> "The Broken spectre, a gigantic figure floating in the sky… has haunted hikers for generations"

THE DYATLOV PASS

NOT SAFE TO TRAVEL!

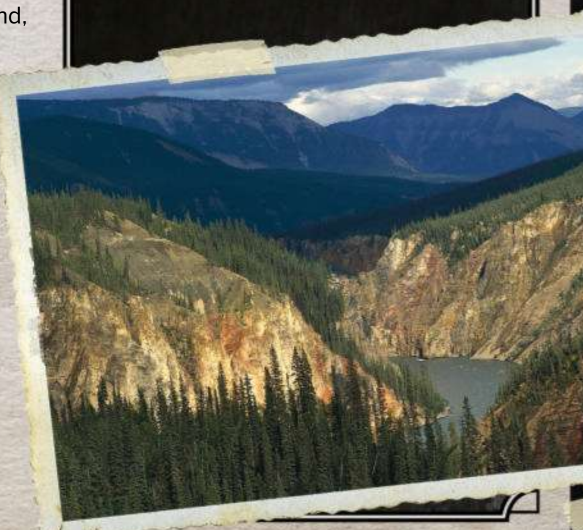
Location: Kholat Syakhl Mountain, Northern Ural, Russia
Time zone: UTC +5 Currency: Russian ruble

This spot upon the eastern slope of Kholat Syakhl, a place whose name translates as the ominous 'Dead Mountain', is where a party of nine highly experienced ski-hikers mysteriously died in 1959. It appeared they abandoned their skis and ran barefoot and half clothed into the wilderness in different directions. Five of the students were determined to have died from hypothermia, but four suffered substantial skull injuries, chest fractures and, horrifyingly, two were missing their eyes – one, her tongue too. While the deaths were blamed on a "compelling natural force" many question what caused nine fit, young, experienced hikers to meet such a bizarre fate? Theories into what really happened range from an avalanche, hypothermic paradoxical undressing and a freak hurricane to conspiracies involving government experiments gone wrong, indigenous tribal attacks and even UFOs and a Russian Yeti. Today, you can venture to this now infamous patch of the Northern Ural Mountains and hike it for yourself – and why not stop by nearby village Ivdel – a so-called epicentre of UFO activity.

NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

Location: Dehcho Region, Northwest Territories, Canada
Time zone: UTC-7
Currency: Canadian dollar

This impressive UNESCO World Heritage Site, known as "The Valley of the Headless Men", can only be accessed by floatplane or boat. At the turn of the 20th century, two brothers were lured into the mountain range thanks to the promise of gold, but their second venture from Alberta proved to be fatal – the duo's skeletons were found three years later, decapitated beside the edge of a river. The valley in which they were discovered has ever since been known as Deadmen Valley, its river earning the moniker Headless Creek. Another prospector was also found decapitated over a decade later and Royal Canadian Mounted Police have indicated there have been others who have met similar fates, with numerous folks vanishing entirely. As well as missing people (and heads), the mountain range has seen a number of mysterious plane crashes – leading to the range earning a second nickname, the Funeral Range. If that's not sinister enough, more recently the Nahanni has been subject to numerous UFO sightings, evidence of Bigfoot activity and even whispers of an extinct predatory bear-dog hybrid, the Amphicyonidae, still lurking in the valleys, despite officially dying off over two million years ago.



BODMIN MOOR

Location: Cornwall, England, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

Bleak, heather-strewn, and swamped with bogs, Bodmin Moor commands fear and awe. Its history and legends include Bronze Age hut circles and cairns, the mighty "giant's house" of Trethevy Quoit, and the precarious Cheesewring, allegedly the result of a struggle between giants and saints. In 1844, 18-year-old servant Charlotte Dymond was found near the stream below Rough Tor, her jealous suitor allegedly having slit her throat, and today she roams the moor in her Sunday best. The Beast of Bodmin Moor also can't be forgotten, or it might come for your livestock. Locals swear the large, panther-like creature exists, with 60 sightings/slayings since the 1970s. More chilling is Jan Tregeagle, who sold his soul to Satan for riches and whose unruly spirit storms on gloomy nights, luring wanderers to their deaths. Having paid priests to protect him, he was safe until his resurrection, when his ghost was doomed to eternally complete impossible tasks. If he stops, the devil will claim him, so Tregeagle toils away, bemoaning his fate.

DOZMARY POOL, BURSTING WITH MYTH

A small lake on Bodmin Moor, Dozmary Pool harbours the Old Storm Woman, a ghostly moorland mermaid who whips the water into wind before flinging it out across the moor. Dozmary is also where Tregeagle howls the loudest, bound to empty the bottomless pool with a leaky limpet shell.

PENDLE HILL

Location: Lancashire, England, UK Time zone: UTC ○ Currency: Pound sterling

Once home to wild boar, ancient woodland, and wolves, now Pendle Hill is steeped in mystery, bewitched by the legacy of 1612. In the 17th century, Europe was in the claws of witch-hunting mania, and in England, this peaked in Pendle. In 1612, Alison Device confessed to asking the devil to curse a pedlar, and members of her family and its rivals were rounded up and taken to trial. All but one were found guilty of murder by sorcery, plus a baloney plot to blow up Lancaster Castle, and hanged. Boasting about meeting the devil in a quarry won't have helped, but the "witches" were most likely wrongly convicted due to reputation wars between the Chattoxes and Demdikes, which revolved around healing and/or black magic. They haunt the villages in the shadow of Pendle Hill, where visitors report sudden intense rage, ghostly whispers, unexplainable scratches, and even being choked, while locals dread the apparitions darting around the hill at night.

JAMES I, A DISCIPLE OF BIAS

Although England held witch trials for 300 years, only 500 "witches" were hanged, making the Pendle 11 a mammoth 2% at once. At the time, James I, who loathed witchcraft, was on the throne. He made the Witchcraft Act of 1604 one of his first laws.

SALISBURY PLAIN

Location: Wiltshire, England, UK **Time zone:** UTC **Currency:** Pound sterling

Stonehenge, the mysterious, stupendous Neolithic stone circle erected around 2,500 BC, is undoubtedly the Plain's claim to fame, but the land has more to offer.

Case in point: the lost village of Imber. Permanently evacuated in 1943 so troops could prepare for D-Day, laughter and chatter echo after dark near the old pub, the scent and warmth of log fires drift on the air, and buildings ring with the clang of Albert Nash's (the village blacksmith who, post-evacuation, died of a broken heart) hammer and anvil.

Further afield, the Flying Highwayman Thomas Boulter, hanged in the 1770s, rides at breakneck speed across the Plain before vanishing into the mist. In Salisbury Cathedral, the noose which hung Lord Stourton sometimes reappears over his grave, where it was left after his execution, and whenever a bishop of Salisbury is dying (officially documented in 1911), white, dazzling, albatross-like birds fly without flapping their wings or perch on the cathedral's spire. These aren't the most horrific, tortured phantoms, but they do make you want to explore the history of Salisbury Plain.

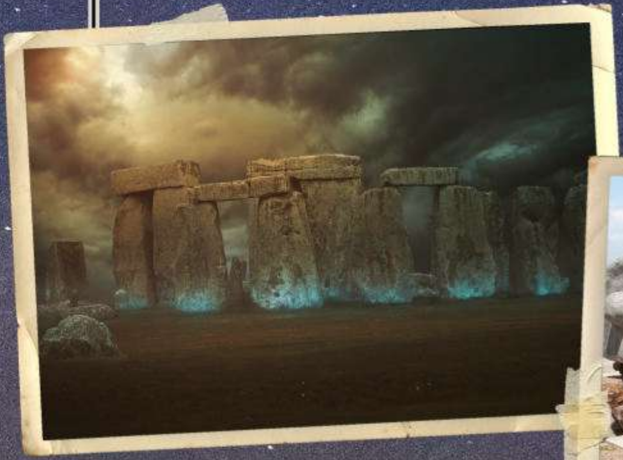


Image source: Getty; Alamy

THE HIMALAYAS

Location: Mahalangur Himal. Nepal/Tibet Time zone: UTC+5:45 Currency: Nepalese rupee

What links Alexander the Great, Sir Edmund Hillary and James Stewart's wife's sock compartment? They all had a part in trying (and failing) to stow away evidence for the existence of the Yeti, aka the Abominable Snowman. This smaller, longer-haired cousin of the American Bigfoot has been spotted throughout the Himalayan border nations. Unlike Bigfoot, however, Asian folk history warns that this is not a cuddly creature: a cryptid has got to eat, and a human passerby is as good a meal as any. Good places to start a Yeti-related trip would include the International Mountain Museum in Pokhara, Nepal, before scaling (via Nepal's Yeti Airways) the heights of the Mahalangur Himal region where some of the spine-chilling sightings of this (and other ghostly mountain phantoms) unfolded. It's also home to a monastery where you can see a Yeti claw and scalp. But given the sheer size (and hazardous nature) of the Yetis' stomping grounds, official tours are recommended.

ROSWELL

Location: New Mexico, USA
Time zone: UTC-7
Currency: US Dollar

Ever happened upon a secret and then failed miserably to keep it? That pretty much sums up what happened at Roswell in the 1950s when a disc-shaped object (initially confirmed as a "flying saucer" before the story was retracted) appeared in a supposed alien crash near the town. Still, if the residents of the town at one point felt ill-treated by that web of (some say) lies, they've certainly made the most of the mysterious situation since. Roswell is packed with alien-related tourism that ranges from the serious to the outright silly. From the International UFO Museum, to The flying-saucer shaped Alien Caffeine Espresso Bar and fast-food chain, Roswell may be the UFOlogy tourism capital of the world.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

AREA 51 AND THE UFO HIGHWAY

Location: 100 miles north of Las Vegas, USA Time zone: UTC -8 Currency: US dollar

What do the US government keep at Area 51 that they don't want us Earthlings to find out? It's a mystery that's intrigued many a UFOlogist for years. This desert spot (seems like aliens apparently love these dusty locales) is more than just another military base; it's a codeword for secrecy and intrigue. Many believe that the relics from the Roswell "extraterrestrial crash site" (alongside, it's claimed, non-human corpses found in the area) were transplanted here. Unless you have high-level security clearance, there's little chance most of us will find out (and tourists are warned from entering, in all seriousness, in the strongest terms – it's closely guarded by armed personnel).

On the upside, the less discreetly-named Extraterrestrial Highway running past the area, on the road north from Las Vegas boasts fun attractions like the Little A'Le'Inn (pronounced Little Alien), the Alien Research Centre (museum and gift shop) and even the E.T. Fresh Jerky shop.

ENTERING
AREA
51

HARRISON HOT SPRINGS

Location: British Columbia, Canada Time zone: UTC -7 Currency: Canadian dollar

Sasquatch – the red-eyed, human-faced, gorilla-like creature who has been sighted across North America since ancient times – is comparatively outgoing among cryptoids; polls show that many Canadians would not be surprised to bump into one while changing their tyre on a forest drive. The hairy humanoid may well be just a hitherto undocumented primate, some say. For members of the Sts'ailes tribe, however – in whose drawings he's popped up for thousands of years – the truth is more complex. They believe Sasquatch is more than just an animal but a physical manifestation of our Earth, a shapeshifter who comes and goes at will.

To take a punt at spotting him, get yourself down to Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia and the adjacent Sasquatch National Park. Visit the town's Sasquatch Museum, before heading out on a locally-run Sasquatch tour or hike. It's also been said that the Sasquatch gather once a year for their own 'meeting'. But for those not invited, a June festival celebrating the phenomena is a great alternative.

RESORT MUNICIPALITY
HARRISON HOT SPRINGS
WELCOMES YOU

POINT PLEASANT

Location: West Virginia, USA Time zone: UTC -5 Currency: US dollar

Curses, winged creatures with hypnotic eyes and mysterious visits from men in black, Point Pleasant's history is anything but pleasant! Things didn't get off to a great start for this unassuming riverside town when, in 1774, beloved Shawnee warrior Cornstalk, his son and two other tribe members were executed by Revolutionary War fighters while carrying out a peace offering. Cornstalk is said to have cursed the new settlement and it has suffered floods, fires, plane crashes, bridge collapses and freak lightning, ever since. And there's more... In the 1960s, the town saw a spate of weird sightings of the Mothman, a human-like creature with wings,who terrorised rooftops, cars and pedestrians. Add in reports of visits from federal agents to 'hush' witnesses and one thing's for sure, the Mothman Museum and yearly Mothman Festival is a feast for fans of the freaky!

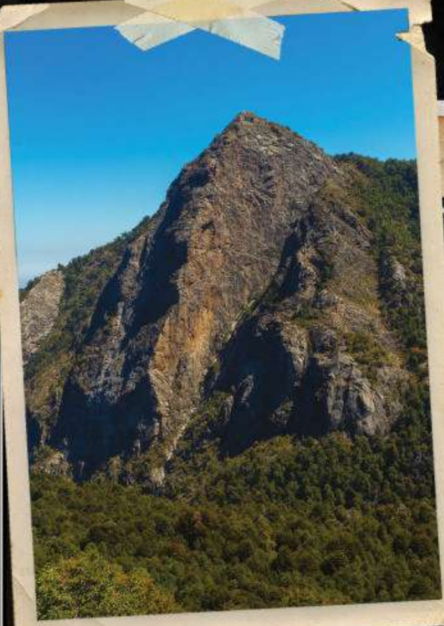
HESSDALEN

Location: Two hours southeast of Trondheim, Norway
Time zone: UTC+1
Currency: Norwegian krone

Fancy combining some UFO-spotting served with a side order of cutting-edge science? Hessdalen might be the spot for you. For more than a century, villagers in this quiet ex-mining valley were noticing something incredible on a semi-regular basis: bright, glimmering orbs in the sky, shooting in unpredictable directions... So far, so spooky, but little was made of the tales. Then in the 1980s, the activity reached a peak (10 to 20 reports per week) and the world took note. Scientists got their thinking caps on. Was it a case of the earth belching ionized gas? Decaying radon? Piezo-electricity? Or extraterrestrials?

While the sightings have since diminished to a dozen times per year, there's still more than enough locally to keep you on your toes: a "UFO camp" featuring cabins with recently added glass roofs; a minibus tour and 2-day hikes into the mountains and a UFO-themed pub (open seasonally) to warm your cockles after all that gawping at the sky.

> "Fancy combining some UFO-spoting with a side of cutting-edge science?"



CHILE'S UFO TRAIL

Location: San Clemente and surrounding area
Time zone: UTC-4
Currency: Chilean peso

What's the best terrain for an extraterrestrial landing? Sadly we can't get one on the phone for a chat. However the tourist board of Chile think the area of San Clemente, nestled in the Andes mountains with its landscape of smooth, odd rock formations, ticks the right boxes. That's why it's been declared Chile's official UFO trail. It's not just that the west coast of the continent has a long history of folklore surrounding human contact with UFOs (see the Nascar Lines site, further north in Peru). But the number of sightings here has been significant – from bright lights dipping into mountain lakes to actual humanoids strolling around the town – so the likelihood of your own encounter is non-zero. Add in that it's one of the most stunning landscapes on Earth and it seems the UFOs have a great nose for travel too.

ENLADRILLADO
ENLADRILLADO

Image source: Getty; Alamy

WYCLIFFE WELL

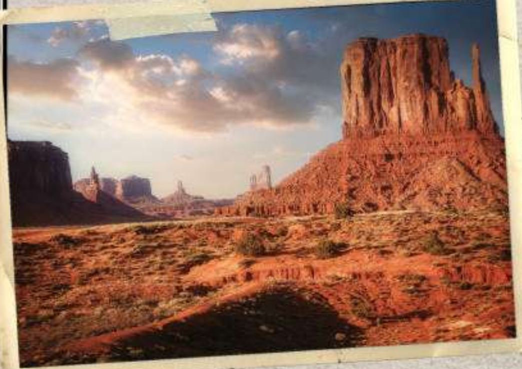
Location: Barkly Tableland, Northern Territory, Australia
Time zone: UTC+9:30 **Currency:** Australian dollar

The Australian Outback: a place of heightened senses, even higher temperatures and apparently a higher than average likelihood of spotting visitors from out of this world. This spot became known for its alien activity when soldiers were posted in the area during World War 2, with spine-tingling tales scribbled in a logbook kept for decades at the local roadhouse. An entrepreneur in the 1980s saw the potential for livening up this desert outpost and invested a reported $4m Australian dollars in a micro-'resort'. Subsequent neglect apparently has given the place extra spook-factor, but if you find yourself heading down the lonely road south to Alice Springs one day, stick your head around the door – and keep your eyes peeled!

NAVAJO NATION

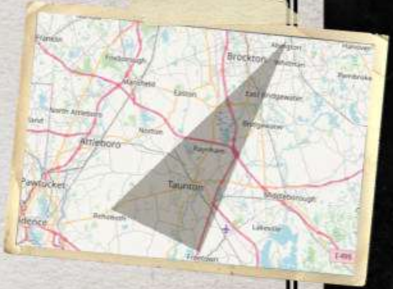
Location: New Mexico, USA **Time zone:** UTC-7 **Currency:** US dollar

The Navajo Nation is the largest Native American reservation in the US, spanning northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico and southeastern Utah and is home to the Navajo tribe who have occupied the area for hundreds of years. This area of desertland is policed by the Navajo Rangers, who take paranormal cases just as seriously as their regular investigations – which is just as well, as the landscape has experienced high levels of supernatural activity, from legendary monsters to ghosts and UFOS – although their federal training didn't quite prepare them for such an array of unearthly phenomenon. Sightings of UFOs – often in the form of strange orbs of light – are common on the reservation. Coins often fall from the sky in the most haunted locations and Bigfoot has even been spotted. But the most fearsome of all the paranormal encounters are the reports of Skinwalkers – shape-shifting evil witches who, according to the nation's retired rangers, no doubt exist. What's more, the rangers theorise that the supernatural activity is all linked, and related to the Navajo origin story. Navajo Nation is private, Federal Indian Land, and you must require a permit issued by the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department to visit. On top of this, make sure you treat the landscape and Navajo beliefs with utmost respect.



THE BRIDGEWATER TRIANGLE

Location: Massachusetts, USA **Time zone:** UTC-5 **Currency:** US dollar



The land equivalent of the infamous Bermuda Triangle (see page 113), the Bridgewater Triangle is a 200 square mile area of Southwestern Massachusetts between Abington, Freetown and Rehoboth. It's a magnet for paranormal activity ranging from UFOs and supernatural humanoids to non-native animal sightings and abnormally large, vicious hounds. The land is reputed to be cursed due to a revered object, the wampum belt, being lost during King Philip's War (1675-1678), the conflict between the colonists and their indigenous allies, the Wampanoag. The Wampanoag told tales of folkloric creatures named pukwudgies who made the area their home. These porcupine-backed goblins often lure humans into forests to meet an unfortunate end. You might spot one in Freetown-Fall River State Forest – the site of numerous murders, reported Satanic cult activity (including animal sacrifice) and misfortunes – or near Lake Nippenicket in Hockomock Swamp (Wampanoag for "where spirits dwell"). Colonial settlers dubbed this vegetated freshwater wetland "Devil's Swamp". At the very centre of the paranormal vortex, it's rife with supernatural activity from phantom fires and "spook lights" to roaming spectres, indigenous cryptids like Thunderbirds (gigantic pterodactyl-like birds) and even Bigfoot.

Lizzie Borden's house (see page 17) is located within the Bridgewater Triangle, as is Taunton State Hospital, a psychiatric institution that performed many questionable experiments on patients and supposedly conducted Satanic rituals in the basement, where strange markings can be seen. The hospital also treated at least two murderers – Anthony Santo, who killed two of his cousins and a six-year-old girl, and Honora "Jolly Jane" Toppan, a psychotic nurse and prolific serial killer, admitting to getting an erotic thrill from holding her victims while they died. Unsurprisingly, the hospital is a hotbed of paranormal activity.

In Rehoboth, the historic one-room schoolhouse, Hornbine School, built in 1862, now functions as a museum, but it also has its fair share of ghostly activity and Route 44 is haunted by a red-headed, flannel-clad hitchhiker. Over in Bridgewater itself, Bridgewater State University is also rumoured to be riddled with ghosts, in particular Woodward Hall.

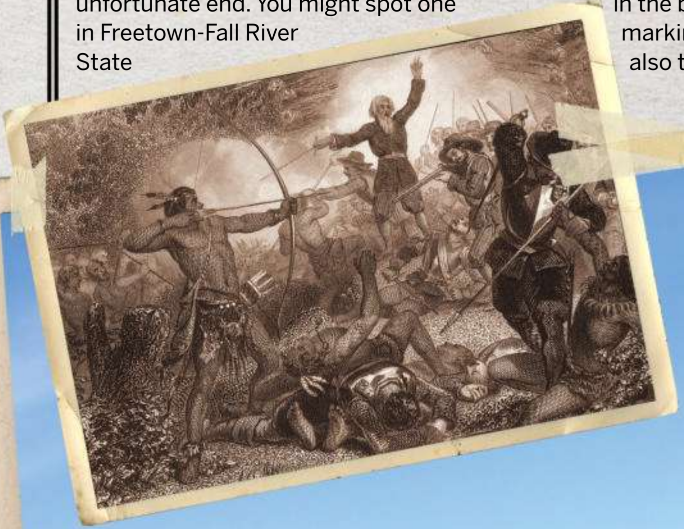


Image source: Wikipeida Commons/ John Phelan

DARE YOU VISIT THE… WITCHES' CAVES?

Fairytale witches live in dingy hovels or fearsome towers, but in folklore, they dwell in caves, making their lairs much easier to find!

Written by Icy Sedgwick

WOOKEY HOLE

Location: Somerset, UK Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

According to legend, the Wookey Hole Witch lived here 1000 years ago. Unlucky in love, she had grown bitter about romance, cursing happy couples from her lair. The locals asked the Abbot of Glastonbury for help, and he sent a monk to the cave. Furious at the intrusion, the witch threw spells at the monk, but they bounced off. In retaliation, the monk hurled holy water at her and she turned to stone. You can find her, now a rock formation, in the first chamber. People believe the small, lumpy stalagmite at her feet is her dog. In 1912, a dig revealed human remains in the cave, but the bones belonged to a man. To see The Witch, book a tour of the cave.

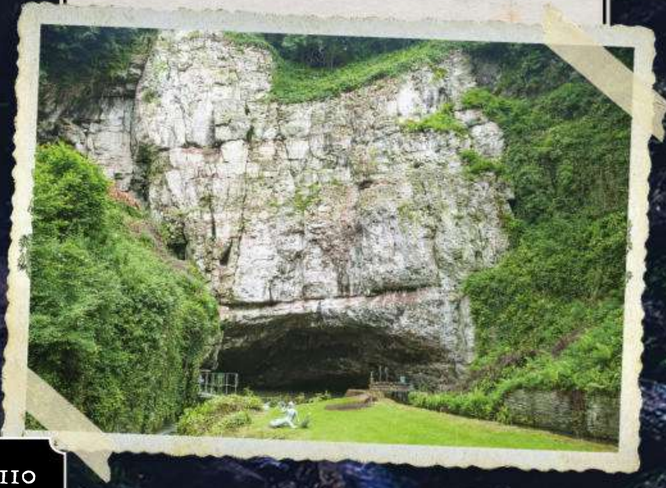
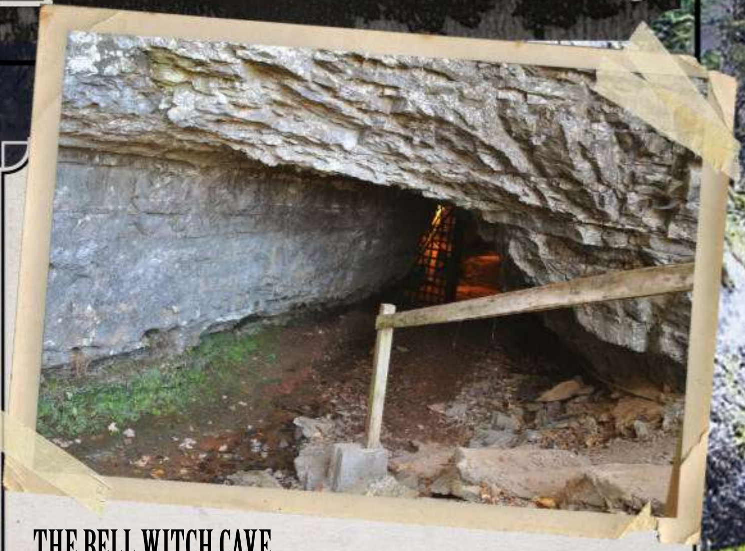


Image source: Getty; Alamy;



THE BELL WITCH CAVE

Location: Adams, Tennessee, USA Time zone: UTC-6 Currency: US dollar

The Bell Witch is perhaps North America's most famous haunting, in which a spirit tormented the Bell family between 1817 and 1821. Unlike other spirits, the Bell Witch was quite a chatty character, identifying herself as Kate Batts, a disgruntled former neighbour with a grudge against the family. Batts supposedly claimed culpability for the death of the family patriarch, John Bell, although other evidence suggests a much less otherworldly worldly death by arsenic poisoning. The cave is on the Bell family's original property, and in some legends, the Witch is said to have assisted a lost child to safety – demonstrating a kindness at odds with her reputation. Some believe she still lives in the cave and visitors have captured orbs and reported strange groans, thumps, and screams. Is Kate showing off for tourists?

Image source: Wikipedia commons/ Www78

ZUGARRAMURDI CAVES

Location: Zugarramurdi, Navarre, Spain Time zone: UTC Currency: Euro

The Zugarramurdi cave is a natural tunnel, eroded over time by the Olabidea River. According to legend, this river begins in Hell, giving the cave a diabolical link even before you get into the stories of pagan rituals that have unfolded. In 1609, the Spanish Inquisition descended upon Basque Spain and more than 7000 local people were tried as witches. 53 were found guilty. The cave has been linked with witchcraft ever since, though the association is no longer negative. The townsfolk hold a feast in the cave on Midsummer's Eve, roasting lamb and lighting bonfires, much to the delight of visitors. Witch fans can also visit the nearby Witch Museum to learn more about the witch trials.

> "This folklore favourite is an old crone with a blue face and iron claws, who enjoys feasting on humans"

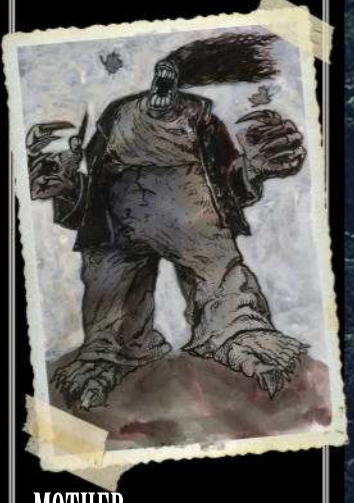
MOTHER SHIPTON'S CAVE

Location: Knaresborough, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

In local legend, Ursula Sontheil was born in the cave in 1488 during a thunderstorm. Her mother refused to name her father, leading to rumours he was the Devil himself. Separated from her mother at a young age, Ursula stayed close to the cave as she grew up and learned to make potions with the plants she found in the nearby woods. After her husband died, she kept his surname and became known as Mother Shipton. People mocked her for her apparent witch-like appearance, but happily made use of her talent for healing and fortune-telling. She became known as a prophetess, and apparently foretold the Great Fire of London and the invention of ships made of iron. People visit her cave now for the Petrifying Well, whose waters turn items left there slowly into stone. The cave is also England's oldest tourist attraction, having seen visitors since way back in 1630!

BLACK ANNIS' BOWER CLOSE

A small cave in the Dane Hills, Leicestershire, is believed to be the home of Black Annis. This folklore favourite is an old crone with a blue face and iron claws, who enjoys feasting on humans. She makes a great cautionary tale since she prowls the area at night, seeking to snatch up misbehaving children. According to legend, she dug the cave out of the cliff using only her claws.



MOTHER GRUNDY'S PARLOUR

Creswell Crags is a limestone gorge in Nottinghamshire, dating back to the Ice Age. One of its caves is known as Mother Grundy's Parlour, named for its 18th century resident. She left the local village of Creswell after being accused of witchcraft and moved into the cave. The villagers invited her back after she cured the child of a local landowner, but Mother Grundy chose to stay in her cave. Another cave also has a huge collection of what have been called "protective witch marks" carved into walls.

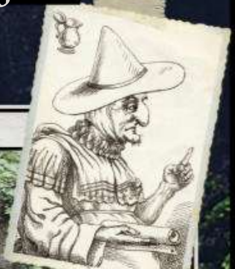


Image source: Geograph

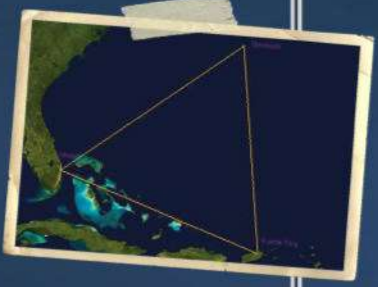
DARK WATERS

What lies beneath, lurking in the deep? Humankind has forever been terrified of what ver unknown entities make dark, uncharted waters their homes, lying in wait ready to swim up and drag us to our deaths

Written by Alice Pattillo & Kate Puttick

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

Location: Bermuda, Miami and the Greater Antilles, North Atlantic Ocean
Time zone: UTC-4 Currency: Bermuda dollar



Possibly the most ominous and infamous patch of water in the entire world, the roughly one million square mile patch of the Atlantic Ocean between Miami, the Greater Antilles and Bermuda has struck terror in the heart of many a traveller for centuries – for fear they might end up like the countless ships and aeroplanes that have vanished without a trace. The legend of the Bermuda Triangle as a paranormal hotspot begins with Christopher Columbus – whose ship logs tell tales of fires falling into the sea, an unusual flickering light upon the horizon and compasses malfunctioning. But it didn't really take off on a global scale until the 1950s when George X Sand brought the missing planes of the US Navy Flight 19 to public attention in *Fate* magazine. Vincent Gaddis coined the term 'The Bermuda Triangle' in a 1964 *Argosy* magazine article – which detailed a number of unexplained occurrences, some of which dated back a hundred years. Ships have been discovered drifting empty, abandoned with all passengers missing. Others have disappeared entirely. Aircrafts have met similar fates – reported one minute only to vanish the next, with rescue missions evaporating into thin air and no wreckages ever being found. Conspiracy theories range from UFOs to parallel universes and even leftover technology from the mythical lost city of Atlantis. Others insist there is a rational explanation for all the so-called mysterious incidents, citing the strong current of the Gulf Stream, natural magnetic anomalies affecting compasses, Methane hydrates in the sea swallowing ships and simple human error. If you are willing to risk it, you can climb aboard a Twilight Cruise at Bermuda Royal Naval Dockyard and hear all the mysterious stories of the famous stretch of ocean with a Rum Swizzle in hand.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

WATER WITCHES

Alluring ladies who lurk in lakes and rivers, waiting to drag you into the deep, haunt waters all over the world…

THE DEVIL'S POOL

Location: Babinda Creek, Queensland, Australia
Time zone: UTC +10
Currency: Australian dollar

Haunted by Oolana, a young woman from the Yindinji Tribe, who fell in love with a warrior from another tribe and ran away with him. When they were captured, she escaped and threw herself into the pool, her cries transforming into the water's torrents. Now, she pulls young men to their death – shockingly 20 young male travellers have died at the site in the past 50 years.

BRIDE'S POOL

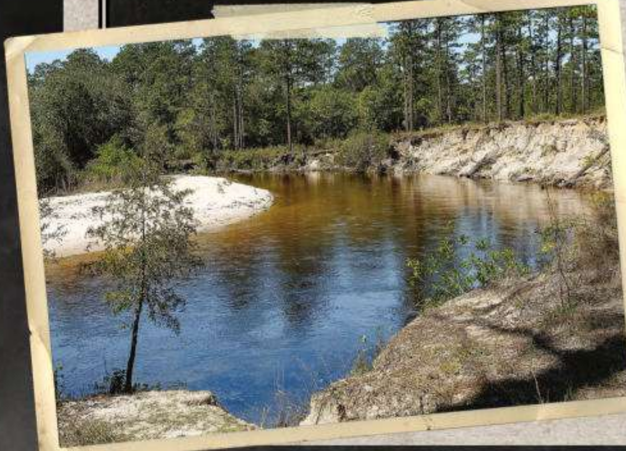
Location: Northeastern New Territories, Hong Kong
Time zone: UTC +8
Currency: Hong Kong dollar

This unlucky bride plunged into the pool and drowned when one of her carriers slipped and her sedan chair toppled on route to meet her groom in stormy weather. Now she forever haunts the waters still dressed in a red cheongsam (traditional bridal dress), combing her hair and awaiting a wedding day that'll never come.

BLACKWATER RIVER

Location: Blackwater River State Park, Florida, USA
Time zone: UTC -5
Currency: US dollar

A young woman with long black hair accompanied by the stench of rotting flesh haunts this popular tubing spot. Watch out though, she'll drag you to a watery grave if you fail to break free of her clutches. If you do escape, you might bump into a blood-soaked woman in a long white gown who has been spotted around the oldest white Atlantic cedar tree in the park.



MANCHAC SWAMP

Location: Ponchatoula, Louisiana, USA
Time zone: UTC -6 Currency: US dollar

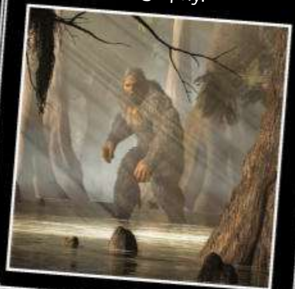
About half an hour northwest of New Orleans, this ancient wetland isn't only riddled with alligators – some say it's home to far more sinister creatures. The most famous legend of Manchac Swamp, aka the Swamp of Ghosts, is that of Julia Brown. This voodoo priestess lived at the edge of this mossy wilderness. She aided Frenier locals with charms and healing, and was often seen sitting on her front porch singing haunting ditties with her guitar. In 1915, the day of Brown's funeral, a hurricane swept through Frenier, decimating the town and its neighbours of Ruddock and Napton, leaving nothing but ruins. Many people perished, swallowed up by the swamp water. One of Julia's songs predicted the town's fate, with the lyrics: "One day I'm going to die and take the whole town with me". This led to rumours that Julia had cursed Frenier and caused the storm but it was likely just another of her many premonitions. Whether or not Julia hexed the town or not, she is said to still haunt the swamp, along with other townsfolk on that fateful day. Today, all that's left of Frenier mass grave is the makeshift Frenier Cemetery which can exclusively be visited on a tour from the Cajun Pride swamp tour company.

But it's not just witches and ghosts that haunt Manchac. The swamp is home to a werewolf-type creature: The Rougarou or loup-garou of Cajun folklore. This terrifying monster with glowing red eyes and razor sharp teeth preys on misbehaving children. Visitors have reported growling and howls coming from deep within the marsh.

THE CAJUN SASQUATCH

Location Honey Island Swamp, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, USA
Time zone UTC -6
Currency US dollar

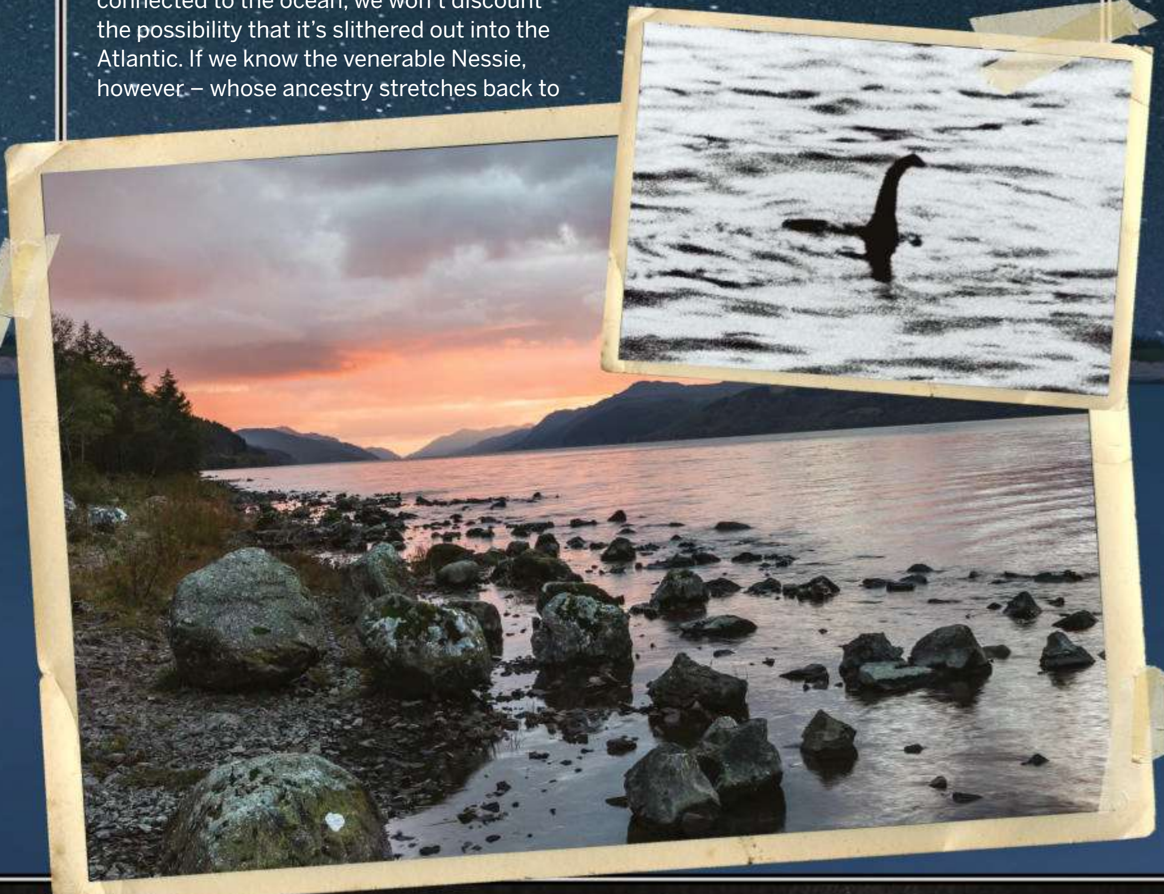
The Cajuns love a good cryptid, and just 40 miles away from New Orleans, in Honey Island Swamp, lurks a 500 pound sasquatch Cajuns call La Bête Noire (The Black Beast). This Louisiana Bigfoot was first seen in 1963 and captured on film by Harlan Ford, a retired air traffic controller who had taken up wildlife photography.



LOCH NESS

Location: The Scottish Great Glen, Scottish Highlands, Scotland, UK
Time zone: UTC-8 Currency: Pound sterling

At the time of writing, headlines are rife with news that Scotland's famous serpentine resident has been spotted in… North Carolina, USA? Now, in this guide, we, of course, only deal with hard facts. And, technically, given that Loch Ness – a cavern-riddled freshwater lake, partially deeper than the North Sea – is connected to the ocean, we won't discount the possibility that it's slithered out into the Atlantic. If we know the venerable Nessie, however – whose ancestry stretches back to the time of St Columba in the 6th century – it's a home-loving sort. So get briefed on the latest intel on the beastie at Drumnadrochit's Loch Ness Centre and Nessieland theme park, before taking a specialised monster-hunting cruise. Or you can hang back for a luxury stay at the Urquhart Castle with a pair of binoculars.



LAKE COMO

Location: Lombardy, Italy
Time zone: UTC +1 Currency: Euro

One of the deepest lakes in Europe is the perfect home for a giant cryptid. Dubbed Lario or Larry, it's thought to be a long extinct sea dinosaur (Lariosaurus) who became trapped inland Nearby is Castello di Vezio where there is a Lariosaurus exhibit, as well as plaster sculpted "ghosts" representing Theodelinda, queen of the Lombards.

FLATHEAD LAKE

Location: Montana, USA
Time zone: UTC -7 Currency: US dollar

The Flathead Lake Monster is a gigantic horned serpent who locals have dubbed Flessie. It's been spotted since the 19th century, but the Kutenai tribe spoke of its existence through legends many years before. Witnesses report a terrifying 30 foot long eel-shaped creature with dark skin and greyish black eyes, others suggest it looks more like a sturgeon.

CRESCENT LAKE

Location: Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada
Time zone: UTC -3:30 Currency: Canadian dollar

Cressie is Canada's answer to Nessie. A gigantic dark brown eel, fifteen feet in length, she's been sighted since the 1950s but likely has origins in the Indigenous legends of the woodum haoot ("pond devil") or haoot tuwedyee ("swimming demon"). The lake is known for its excessively large eels, who many claim are Cressie's offspring, naturally.

Image source: Getty; Alamy

FORMIDABLE FORESTS AND PETRIFYING WOODS

Woodlands provide solitude and sanctuary for many creatures, from birds and bears to witches and Bigfoot...

Written by Alice Pattillo

TAKE CARE!

Nature can be a cruel mistress, so make sure you take the proper precautions when exploring it: Enlist an expert, stick to trails, wear sensible clothing and never walk alone!

Image source: Alamy

AOKIGAHARA FOREST

Location: Honshu, Japan Time zone: UTC+9 Currency: Yen

This 'Sea of Trees' at the base of Mount Fuji is nicknamed 'The Suicide Forest' due to the number of people who have tragically taken their own lives within its dense thickets. Its lava rock reportedly sends compasses haywire thanks to its magnetism, with its porosity causing sound to be absorbed, resulting in an eerie stillness. Long associated with death, some say ubasute was practised in the forest, a folkloric Japanese tradition of carrying elderly relatives to a remote location and abandoning them, leaving them to die – something not thought to have been carried out in actuality. Regardless, it is said that the spirits, or yūrei, of those left there remain forever trapped within Aokigahara.

HOIA-BACIU FOREST

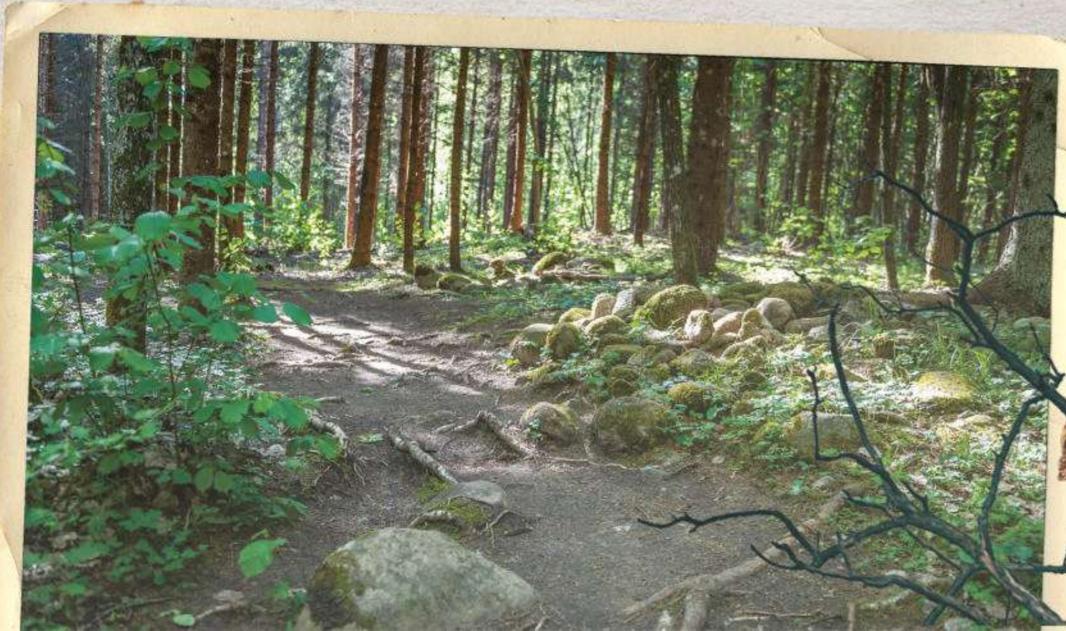
Location: Transylvania, Romania Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Euro

Romania is full of haunted places, just see page 48, but nowhere in Transylvania is quite so supernaturally charged than Hoia-Baciu Forest – in fact, it might be the creepiest forest in the world. Located just outside of Cluj-Napoca, this 250 hectare stretch of woodland has everything from UFOs to vanishings and ghosts. Supposedly, alarm bells started ringing when a shepherd went missing here with 200 sheep, and a girl once disappeared in the woods, only to be found five years later as if she'd not be gone a day. In 1968, a military technician photographed what looked like an extraterrestrial spaceship hovering over the Clearing – the forest's most frightening spot. Many of the trees in Hoia-Baciu grow in peculiar ways: twisted, contorted, gnarly trunks that often spiral clockwise and cannot be explained by any scientist. Bizarre noises, footsteps, sensations you are being watched, shadow figures… Hoia-Baciu has it all.

POKAINI FOREST

Location: Naudītes Pagasts, Latvia Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Euro

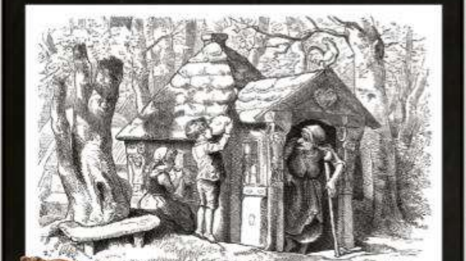
The mysterious clusters of rocks deep in this Latvian forest have lured people deep into the woodlands for centuries. Numerous theories have been proposed, such as they were collected in order to build a castle that never materialised or simply discarded while clearing nearby fields for farming. Neither explanation entirely makes sense, and that's why many believe the forest is a powerful, spiritual place thanks to these piles of pebbles, while others deem the woods haunted or a portal to another realm.



BLACK FOREST

Location: Baden-Württemberg, Germany
Time zone: UTC+1
Currency: Euro

The Black Forest is a gigantic, ancient forest that stretches across the mountains of Southwest Germany, 100 miles long and up to 30 miles wide and is as shrouded in mystery as its forest floor is shrouded in darkness by the thick, dense canopy of conifers. The Brothers Grimm collected folklore stories such as Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Repunzel and Snow White, all said to have been inspired by the thickets of the Black Forest and its untamed nature – the original fairy tales didn't all have happy endings, unlike the sanitised Disney versions we are familiar with today.



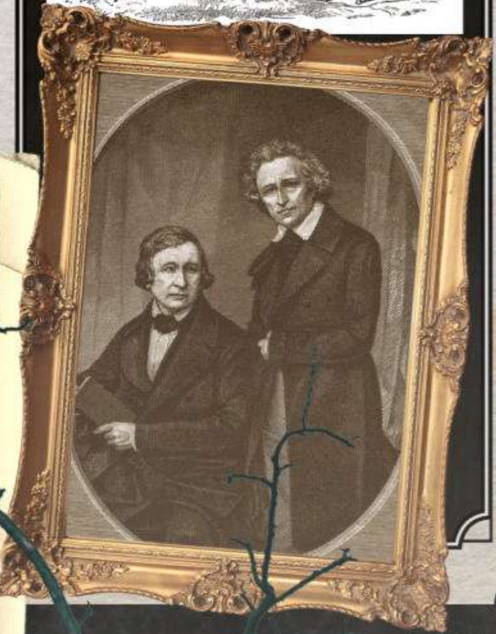


Image source: Getty, Alamy

EPPING FOREST

Location: Essex, England
Time zone: UTC 0
Currency: Pound sterling

This large woodland north of London holds the title of England's most haunted forest. Thanks to its close proximity to the big smoke, many murdered bodies have been buried here, allegedly including many of the notorious Kray twins' victims. Highwayman Dick Turpin used a cave in the forest as a hideout for many years, the ghost of whom TV show Most Haunted made contact with in 2003. But many more phantoms can be found between the unkempt trees of this ancient woodland, including the spirit of Celtic queen Boudicca, apparitions of a headless horseman, a horseman with his head (and a tricorn hat and black cape) atop a black stallion, the ghost of a drowned girl, a headless biker and a horse drawn carriage. Other poltergeist activity is also common, with many reports of being touched or pushed by seemingly nothing. Epping Forest also has its very own execution site – Hangman's Hill – where the figure of a man can be seen. If you leave your car in neutral, it will supposedly roll upwards towards the tree that once bore a noose.

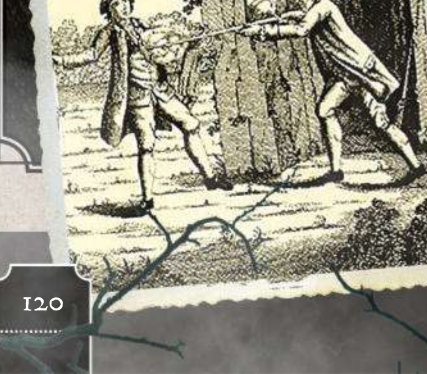
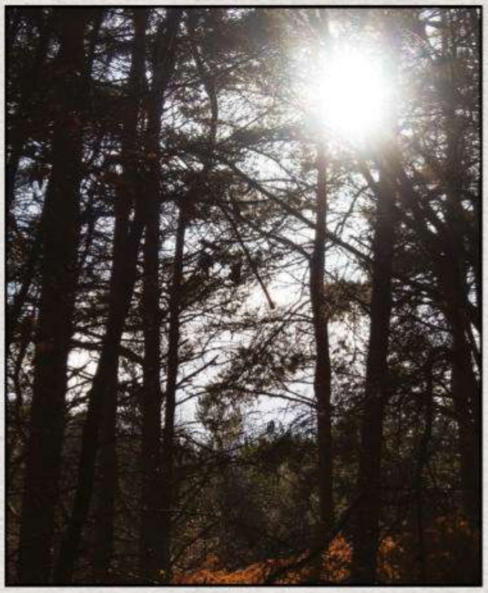


Image source: Getty, Alamy

CANNOCK CHASE

Location: Staffordshire, England Time zone: UTC0 Currency: Pound sterling

This Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is also a paranormal hotspot. In 2007, werewolves were reportedly sighted here; from 1988 until the early 90s, there were numerous UFO sightings and the area also has its own grey lady – dubbed The Lady of the Chase – a pale figure of a nude woman with hypnotic eyes who instils dread in those she comes across. There have also been accounts of black-eyed children – an urban legend commonly sighted across the US, black-eyed children are a paranormal entity that appears as a pale, black-eyed child between the ages of six and 16. Others say these so-called black-eyed children are the ghosts of the three young girls who were tragically murdered and discovered within the woodlands in the 1960s. More recently, baby dolls were found nailed to some of the trees, adding to the eerie mystery of the area.



THE PINE BARRENS

Location: New Jersey, United States Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

This enormous stretch of woodland has several stories hidden within its dense evergreens. There are the ghost towns, former colonial towns now relics of a by-gone era, left to disintergrate once coal was found in Pennsylvania. The most famous Pinelands legend is the Jersey Devil. This cloven-hooved, bat-winged creature with devilish horns, a forked tail and clawed hands was actually spawned by a human woman. Mother Leeds gave birth to a seemingly normal 13th child, but it morphed into a goat-headed creature, let out a hideous scream and escape up the chimney into the pines. Many suspected that Ms Leeds was a witch, and the child's father? Satan himself. Just like Bigfoot, many believers in the Jersey Devil propose that rather than a devil bore by a witch, he is simply an undiscovered species of animal who has long made the vast, remote wilderness his home.

The Jersey Devil has a few pals though: there are whispers that pirate Captain Kidd buried treasure on these Atlantic shores and still haunts the nearby beach, often seen with the Devil. A golden haired girl has also been spotted with the infamous cryptid. Rumour has it that she fell in love with the Jersey Devil's son, but her father wouldn't allow the union, prompting her to commit suicide. Other ghosts in the Pine include the Black Doctor, an African-American healer, who was supposedly banned from practising medicine on account of his race. Forced into seclusion in the Pine Barrens, he studied textbooks and native remedies and uses his knowledge to help all those he comes across.

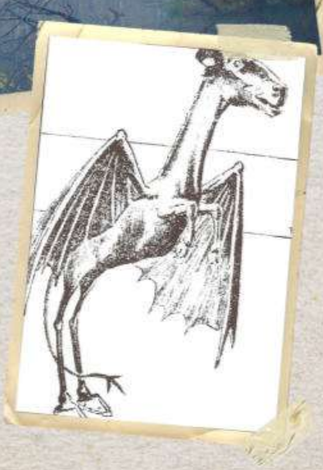


Image source: FreeVectorMaps.com;

THE HUNT FOR BIGFOOT USA

Location: Various, USA Time zone: UTC-5/-8
Currency: US dollar

Bigfoot, also known as Wood Ape or Sasquatch, is the most infamous cryptid in the world. These gigantic Neanderthal-like ape-men with a skunk-like stench have been spotted all over North America for centuries. Today, over 10% of Americans believe that Bigfoot is real, and hunting for them is known as 'Squatching'. Many states have protection orders on Bigfoot, as it's an endangered species, so if you do find one, treat 'em nice! If you fancy yourself a 'squatcher', there are a few locations you might want to investigate…

1 WASHINGTON

The most active state for Bigfoot activity, particularly in Pierce County.

HOT SPOTS: Mount Rainier National Park, The North Cascades, Ape Canyon, Olympic National Park

2 CALIFORNIA

Humboldt County is dubbed the Bigfoot capital of the world.

HOT SPOTS: Six Rivers National Forest (Willow Creek; Bluff Creek), Redwoods State Park, Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, Lake Shore Forest Service Campground

3 FLORIDA

Known as the Skunk Ape, sightings have been reportd throughout the Everglades.

HOT SPOTS: Collier County (Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve)

4 OHIO

Known as the Grassman,the infamous 'Ohio Howl' recordings were heard in Columbiana County.

HOT SPOTS: Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Mogadore Reservoir, West Branch State Park, Audubon wildlife preserve, Pleasant Hill Lake Park, Salt Fork State Park

5 ILLINOIS

Jackson and Madison Counties have seen their fair share of sasquatch.

HOT SPOTS: Shawnee National Forest (Garden of the Gods Wilderness), Big Muddy River, Giant City State Park

6 OREGON

The Oregon Bigfoot Festival and the North American Bigfoot Center are located in Boring.

HOT SPOTS: The Bigfoot trap on the Collings Mountain hiking trail in the Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest, Mount Hood National Forest (Salmon Huckleberry Wilderness)

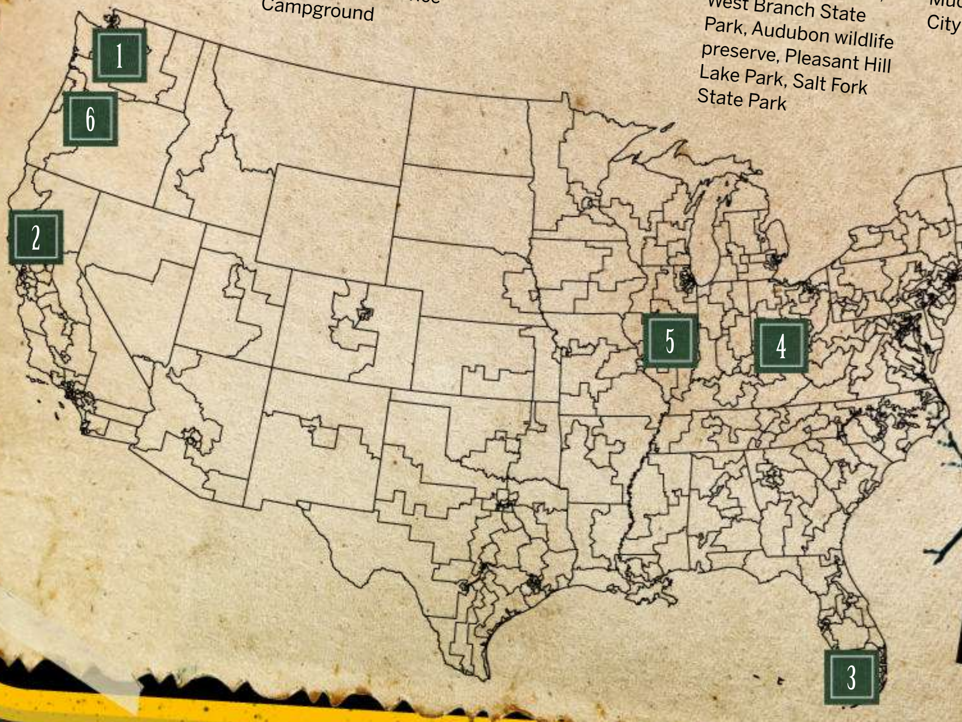


Image source: FreeVectorMaps.com

THE BIGFOOT FIELD RESEARCHERS ORGANIZATION (BFRO)

www.bfro.net

The BFRO is devoted to the scientific study and research of Bigfoot. The organisation arranges group expeditions to bigfoot hotspots all across the United States, and they are open to everyone!

MAGICAL & MACABRE MUSEUMS

Explore the world's never-ending fascination with death and the paranormal, permanently preserved and on display for all to see!

Written by Alice Pattillo, Aiden Dalby and Nell Darby

All museums have a few skeletons in their closet, especially the most mainstream institutions. If they aren't displaying the ancient bones of warriors or primitive ritualistic pottery devoted to pagan deities, they're showing morbid medicinal implements or extinct animal taxidermy. And if it's not part of their exhibit, you can guarantee the collections below hold some sinister secrets. In fact, many of the most famous and highly regarded museums have their own ghosts or even curses – the price they pay when acquiring archaic artefacts.

The Louvre, in Paris, is home to numerous spectres, including Jack the Skinner, who was reportedly seen by Napoleon Bonaparte and has a vendetta against royals.

Venture to The British Museum, situated in the heart of London, and you will find the Unlucky Mummy – a coffin lid dating back over 1000 years that is said to cause death and destruction to all those who own it. Rumour has it that it even caused the sinking of the Titanic. The museum is also home to numerous ghosts, including that of a dog.

Just a stone's throw away, at Victoria and Albert (V&A), you can have a gander at the Great Bed of Ware, but don't dare take a nap on this gigantic four-poster cot – unless you are of royal blood – as commoners won't last the night.

And across the road at The Natural History Museum, the Cursed Amethyst is held in The Vault. Its curse is so powerful that its previous owner stowed it away in seven locked boxes within a bank vault. It was given to the museum in 1941, with a letter advising them to throw it in the sea.

Across the pond at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC, the infamous Hope Diamond is on permanent exhibition, another cursed gem. Meanwhile, in Manhattan, even the Metropolitan Museum of Art harbours phantoms, including that of a young girl

And it's not just major museums that are home to spooks and spectres. Robert the Doll, who is thought to have supernatural abilities and inspired the iconic horror villain Chucky, is housed at Fort East Martello Museum in Key West, Florida. The haunted doll is one of the museum's prime attractions and visitors travel from all over the world just to catch a glimpse of Robert and brave the threat of winding up cursed. Similarly, the Thirsk museum – a small local history museum in Yorkshire, England – holds Busby's stoop chair, a cursed stool that will bring misfortune to anyone who sits on it.

But while the world's biggest galleries play host to a plethora of paranormality in their own right, they often shy away from exploring those mysteries in their own halls. If you're looking to dig a little deeper, why not take a trip to one of the world's many darkness-dedicated museums? From grisly history to cryptozoology, folklore phantoms and cabinets of curiosity, here are our must-see spots to satisfy your spook-seeking soul…

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

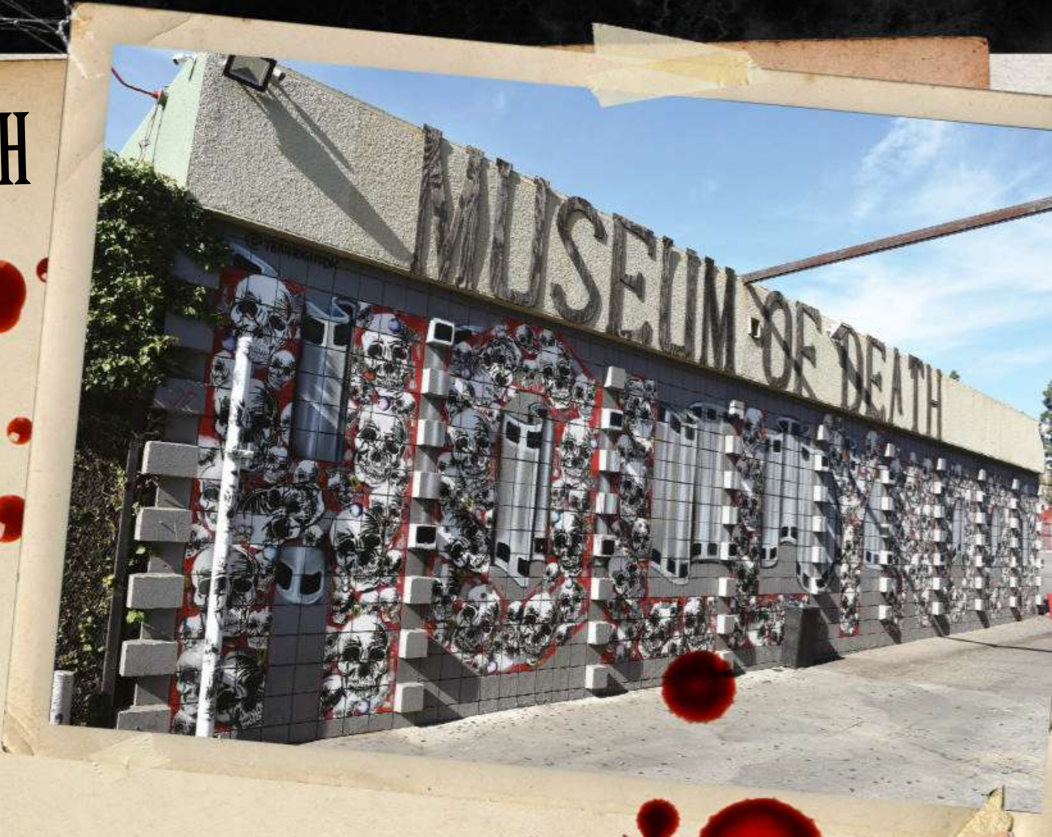
The earliest 'museums' were called "cabinets of curiosities", or "rooms of wonder". Dating back to the 17th century, these were collections of notable objects including natural wonders (sometimes faked, such as the Fiji mermaid, a baby monkey sewn to the back half of a fish), historical relics or antiquities and works of art. Often these collections were compiled by wealthy individuals, members of the merchant class and early scientists. They focused on curiosity, as the name suggests – displaying peculiar objects that inspired conversation, avoiding any explanations or insight – unlike a modern day museum. After an initial boom, over the course of the 19th century, these 'curiosities' became thought of as 'vulgar', misleading objects of study, and the popularity of the cabinets declined. Obscure objects found a new home in freakshows and sideshows; and as museums devoted to facts and evidence, rather than curiosities and conjecture, became the norm. Many grew into reputable institutions, such as Oxford's Ashmolean Museum and Philadelphia's Mütter Museum (p125).

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

THE MUSEUM OF DEATH

Location: Hollywood, California, USA **Time zone:** UTC-8 **Currency:** US dollar

What is creepier than an entire museum devoted to death? The Museum of Death is a morbid, disturbing gallery that's not for the faint of heart. Boasting a large collection of serial killer artwork, letters and items, it's a chilling delve into the darkside of death. Crime scene photographs, autopsy footage, mortuary equipment and even torture devices are all on display, along with the head of a French serial killer and a significant number of taxidermied animals. The original LA venue is temporarily closed, but the museum's founders, J.D. Healy and Cathee Shultz, have opened a second premises in New Orleans so you can get your macabre fix if you happen to be in The Big Easy.



> "The Museum of Death is a morbid, disturbing gallery that's not for the faint of heart"

TORTURE MUSEUM

Location: Bloemenmarkt, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Time zone: UTC+1
Currency: Euro

In earlier centuries, European countries were home to scaffolds and gallows, inquisitions and executioners. In the Netherlands, this dark history is remembered in its Torture Museum, situated opposite the Flower Market in Amsterdam, which features more than 40 instruments of punishment, taken from different European countries. These include such items as the inquisition chair, the rack, the skullcracker and the rather bizarre-looking Judas Cradle. The aim is to educate visitors about the use of torture and the death penalty, not just in history, but looking at how it is still being employed in modern-day societies.

THE MUSEUM OF THE MUMMIES

Location: Guanajuato, Mexico **Time zone:** UTC-5 **Currency:** Mexican peso

El Museo de las Momias – the Museum of the Mummies – was opened 50 years ago, but it wouldn't exist if not for a historic tax discrepancy. This tax was payable on bodies, and when some families didn't pay it, bodies were disinterred. Many were the victims of a cholera outbreak in the 1830s. Some were taken to a local building to be stored, and the dry climate led to natural mummification. Soon, cemetery workers started to charge locals to look at the bodies; today, you can see some 60 of them.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;

THE MÜTTER MUSEUM

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

Chang and Eng Bunker were Siamese – or conjoined – twins, born in what is now Thailand in 1811, but they settled in the US and spent much of their lives as touring performers. When they died in 1874, the College of Physicians conducted their autopsies, and specimens were sent to the college's museum, the Mütter Museum. Today, their conjoined livers and a plaster cast of their torsos are on display, part of the museum's large collection of foetal Siamese twin specimens and other artefacts. The Mütter states that it aims to help the public 'appreciate the mysteries and beauty of the human body'.

MUSEUM OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY

Location: Culver City, California, USA
Time zone: UTC-8
Currency: US dollar

The brainchild of a husband and wife team – David Hildebrand Wilson and Diana Drake Wilson – this small museum near LA presents a mix of exhibits that it claims will advance our knowledge of the Lower Jurassic period. In reality, experts have doubts as to the authenticity of some of the items, and it is considered by some to simply be an 'homage' to historic cabinets of curiosities. There is a collection of artefacts taken from local trailer parks, a set of decomposing dice and examples of old cures and remedies… and 25,000 people a year visit it.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRYPTOZOOLOGY MUSEUM

Location: Thompson's Point, Maine, USA Time zone: UTC-8 Currency: US dollar

This small but unique museum is the world's only museum devoted to the pseudoscientific study of cryptozoology. Founder Loren Coleman has amassed an incredible collection of scientific specimens, artifacts and replicas related to some of the world's most famous cryptids, as well as those you might not have heard of and even some more recently discovered real animals, such as the mountain gorilla, okapi, coelacanth and megamouth shark.

INTERNATIONAL CRYPTOZOOLOGY
MUSEUM

PARANORMAL

THE PARANORMAL MUSEUM

Location: Asbury Park, New Jersey, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US dollar

A short walk from Asbury Park, seemingly hidden inside the Paranormal Books & Curiosities store, this museum offers tours as well as exhibits. It was founded in 2008 by Kathy Kelly, a lover of all things unexplained, to share her passion for folklore and local lore. The highlight is a skull supposedly of the Jersey Devil, a biped wyvern-like creature with the hooves, head of a horse or goat with horns and large leathery wings. Visits must be booked in advance but you receive a 60-minute guided tour with hands-on experiences with items in the collection.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF MAGIC

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF MAGIC

Location: Marshall, Michigan, USA
Time zone: UTC-5
Currency: US Dollar

In the late 70s, Robert and Elaine Lund moved to Marshall, Michigan looking for a quiet place to display their large collection of magic memorabilia for the world to see. Today you can see this collection of books, posters, photographs and props from magicians all around the world. Between December and March you'll need to arrange an appointment prior to your visit.

MUSEO DEI TAROCCHI

Location: Riola, Bologna, Italy Time zone: UTC+2 Currency: Euro

'The Tarot Museum' claims to be the first in the world to offer exhibits on tarot cards and its related arts. Learn about the cards' origins in Italy before spreading across Europe and eventually the world. Unique decks are on display, as well as art on the subject of playing cards and information on the art of arcana. A reservation is needed to visit but they promise a unique experience tailored to you.

I TAROCCHI DE
I TAROCCHI VISCONTI SFORZA
Mazzi storici
TAROCCHI DORATI DEL RINASCIMENTO
L'ANGELO
XX
SOLA BUSCA

THE MUSEUM OF CURIOSITIES

Location: Nottingham, England, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

Husband and wife Steve and Marie Wilson opened the museum when they found their collection of haunted and supernatural objects would no longer fit in their home. Whether you're a fan of horror films, ghosts or the paranormal, there is something for you here if you dare enter. The museum claims to have more than 1000 haunted objects, including a Victorian hearse which has been reported to have moved on its own on a few occasions. Many visitors have reported having felt an other-worldly presence of someone or something in the room with them.

THE MUSEUM OF SHADOWS

Location: Omaha, Nebraska, USA Time zone: UTC-5 Currency: US dollar

MUSEUM OF SHADOWS
Haunted Artifacts Oddities
AS SEEN ON TRAVEL CHANNEL
1110 DOUGLAS ST.
Gift Shop

Located in the old market district of Omaha is the Museum of Shadows, housing all things macabre and paranormal. Owners Nate and Kaliegh Ratherman regularly receive new additions which are investigated before being included to the collection. Today they claim to have the largest collection of verified haunted objects in the world. Because of this it has been featured on numerous TV channels such as Discovery and the Travel Channel. The museum hosts many after-hours ghost hunts around its premises, inviting guests to bring their own paranormal equipment (or you can rent them from staff).

THE HAUNTED MUSEUM & SPIRIT SHOP

Location: Stoke-On-Trent, England, UK
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

Despite being relatively young, having only opened in 2021, this museum has made a splash for having numerous unexplained paranormal activities caught on camera. If you're looking for a museum with practical exhibits, the Haunted Museum has plenty on offer. Brave visitors can get up close and personal with torture chairs, straight jackets, coffins and even a used slab from a morgue. Tours, ghost hunts, seances, sleepovers, tarot readings and workshops are all held in the building. Admission is for over 18s only.

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Museum of Shadows;

MAGICUM MUSEUM

Location: Berlin, Germany
Time zone: UTC+1
Currency: Euro

Found underground in the centre of Berlin is a small space covering mysticism, illusion, history and more in a completely interactive experience. See how magic has been used throughout the years in different ways by cultures around the world; exploring how the paranormal has often been found adjacent to specific cultures' official religions, the ways people have used mystical abilities – both convincingly and otherwise – to gain personal advantage or just as a form of entertainment. But it's not just about learning the history of magic. Kids and adults alike can take part in the exhibits, puzzles and games sprinkled throughout.

HEXENMUSEUM SCHWEIZ

Location: Gränichen, Aargau, Switzerland Time zone: UTC+1 Currency: Swiss franc

The Valais witch trials were the first witch-hunts in Europe beginning in 1428 in what we know today as Switzerland. Housed within Liebegg Castle, the Swiss Witch Museum teaches the history of these deadly systematic campaigns that would spread far and wide. Exhibits dip into Swiss folklore and legends as well as misconceptions surrounding witchcraft and the effects that the witch trials have left to this day. The museum's goal is to clear up the negative connotations surrounding the term witchcraft and show how it was once a method of healing and harmless divination before the witch trials changed everything.

> "GUESTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PICK UP OBJECTS AND FEEL A CONNECTION WITH THE GHOSTLY WORLD"

THE HAUNTED ANTIQUES PARANORMAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Location: Hinckley, England, UK
Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

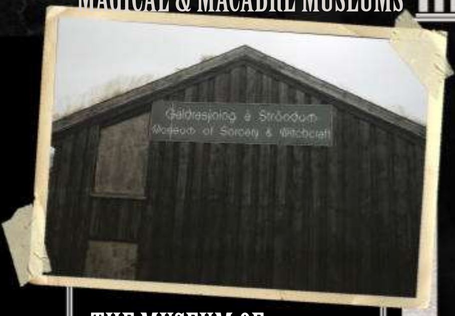
Home to the first paranormal research centre in the UK, nothing in this museum is behind glass as the owners want to encourage guests to pick up objects and try to experience a connection with the ghostly world; allegedly every item in the collection has a particular spirit attached and their own unique histories. Ghost hunts, paranormal investigations and escape rooms can all be arranged and experienced inside this otherwise unassuming building in Hinckley, Leicestershire.

Image source: Getty; Alamy;Wikipedia Commons/ Bensisto/ Miahaite

THE MUSEUM OF WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

Location: Boscastle, England, UK Time zone: UTC Currency: Pound sterling

Founded originally on the Isle of Man by magician Cecil Williamson in the 1950s from items in his personal collection, the museum was purchased by wiccan Geralf Gardner and moved to Boscastle, Cornwall in the 70s. Inside you'll find exhibits on Britain's history with witchcraft including a recreation of a 19th century wiccan cottage. Items inside have been donated by prominent figures in the world of witchcraft in the hopes of representing the subject as authentically and respectfully as possible. There are 3000 objects and 7000 books inside for you to explore and witness.



THE MUSEUM OF ICELANDIC WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY

Location: Hólmavík, Iceland
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Króna

Also known as Strandagaldur, this museum is located in a small village that was a hotbed for witchcraft activity. Inside you'll find magic staves, grimoires and other magical paraphernalia. But the most shocking item is the replica Nábrók or 'necropants,' a pair of trousers made from human skin which was allegedly used in Icelandic witchcraft. If you manage to stomach that, you may want to also see the replica tilberi, demonic worm-like creatures with mouths on each end that was said to steal milk from farmer's cows.

VIKTOR WYND'S MUSEUM OF CURIOSITIES

Location: London, England, UK
Time zone: UTC
Currency: Pound sterling

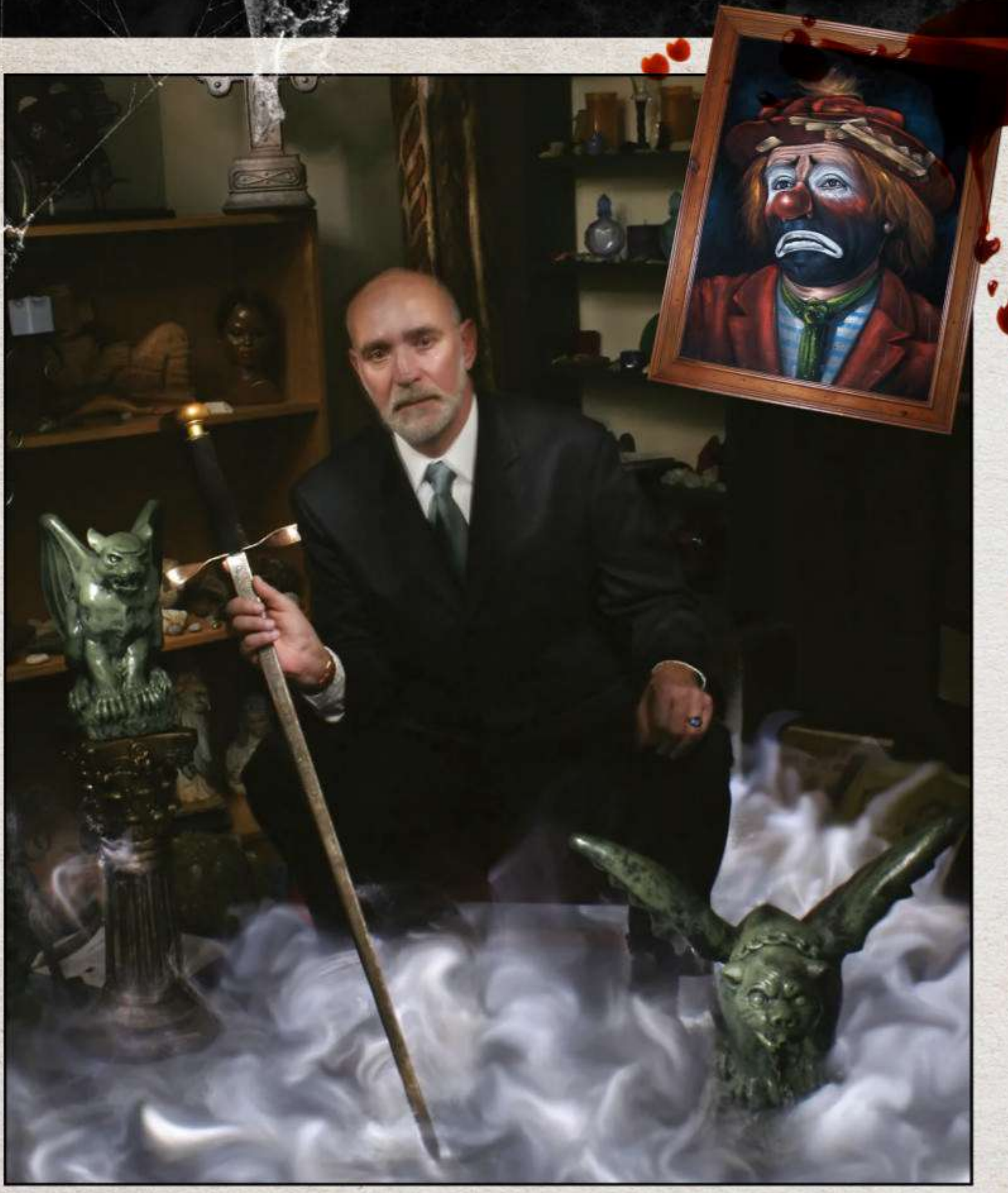
Viktor Wynd's museum is a physical representation of his eccentric mind. As such, it's a cluttered and often incoherent experience of eclectic and fascinating items from Fiji mermaids and shrunken heads to McDonalds Happy Meal toys and dodo bones. The museum keeps nothing behind closed doors, displaying every oddity. And what's more, you can enjoy it all while sipping on Absinthe!

JOHN ZAFFIS PARANORMAL MUSEUM

Location: Stratford, Connecticut, USA
Time zone: UTC-5 **Currency:** US dollar

Paranormal researcher John Zaffis, nephew of Ed and Lorraine Warren, opened his museum in 2004 after receiving numerous objects from people claiming that their item was possessed by a spirit. In similar fashion to the Warrens' Occult Museum (which is now permanently closed) the items have been acquired from all over the world, each with a sinister story to tell – and often a malevolent spirit attached! But don't fret, everything has been ritually binded before being displayed. If you have an item you want to donate, the museum is happy to perform a ritual on it, just get in touch. The museum is currently searching for a new premises, but it'll be back soon, presumably bigger and better than ever!

> "DON'T FRET, EVERYTHING HAS BEEN RITUALLY BINDED BEFORE BEING DISPLAYED"



THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

Location: Spring Green, Wisconsin, USA **Time zone:** UTC-6 **Currency:** US dollar

Alex Jordan Jr built the house on top of Deer Shelter Rock as a getaway home, but its incredible architectural design lured in travellers. Due to the interest, he opened his doors to visitors in 1959. Several additions were made to the house over the decades, turning it more and more into a tourist attraction, displaying odd and exotic objects that are displayed as more of an experience than an exhibit. These take on a different charm at night and you can see this in what they're calling the 'Dark Side of the House' experience. The "world's largest indoor carousel" complete with handcrafted dolls, and the house itself take on a haunting quality. While many of the objects throughout the house are said to be fake or replicas, the experience of the museum isn't hindered by this and it may only add to the eccentricness of it all.

Image source: Getty; Alamy; Wikipedia commons / Ronincmc

THE TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO CURSED & CREEPY DESTINATIONS

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

The Traveller's Guide To
Cursed & Creepy Destinations Editorial
Editor **Alice Pattillo**
Art Editor **Jon Wells**
Compiled by **Drew Sleep & Steve Dacombe**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**
Editorial Director **Jon White**
Managing Director **Grainne McKenna**

Contributors
Ben Biggs, Ellie Brown, Melanie Clegg, Kate Cherrell, Rosie Cranie-Higgs, Aiden Dalby, Nell Darby, Joanna Elphick, Zara Gasper, Philippa Grafton, Mike Haskew, Jessica Leggett, April Madden, Tanita Matthews, Alice Pattillo, Kate Puttick and Icy Sedgwick

Cover images
Getty; Alamy

Photography
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com
www.futurecontenthub.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Matthew Eglinton**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely, Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman**

Printed in the UK

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk – For enquiries, please email:
mfcommunications@futurenet.com

The Traveller's Guide to Cursed & Creepy Destinations
Second Edition (AHB5831)
© 2024 Future Publishing Limited

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this bookazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards.

All contents © 2024 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

FUTURE
Connectors.
Creators.
Experience
Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive Officer **Jon Steinberg**
Non-Executive Chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief Financial and Strategy Officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Part of the
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
bookazine series

Widely Recycled

ipso.
For press freedom with responsibility

THE TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO

CURSED & CREEPY

DESTINATIONS

A FIELD GUIDE TO SPOOKS

PERFORMING A PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION

Paranormal Investigating

Discover what attracts us to cursed and creepy places, what to look for and how to hunt for the supernatural

WELCOME TO DRACULA COUNTRY

Haunted Hotspots

From forests and castles to entire countries, cities and towns roaming with ghouls – explore over 200 spooky spots

DARE YOU VISIT THE... WITCHES' CAVES?

Legend Tripping

Delve into the folklore that keeps us daring to return to some of the world's most cursed and creepy places

THE WORLD'S SPOOKIEST CEMETERIES

HIGHGATE CEMETERY

Tombstone Tourism

Learn how to become a responsible 'tombstone tourist' and which cemeteries you must see before you die!

BOOKAZINE